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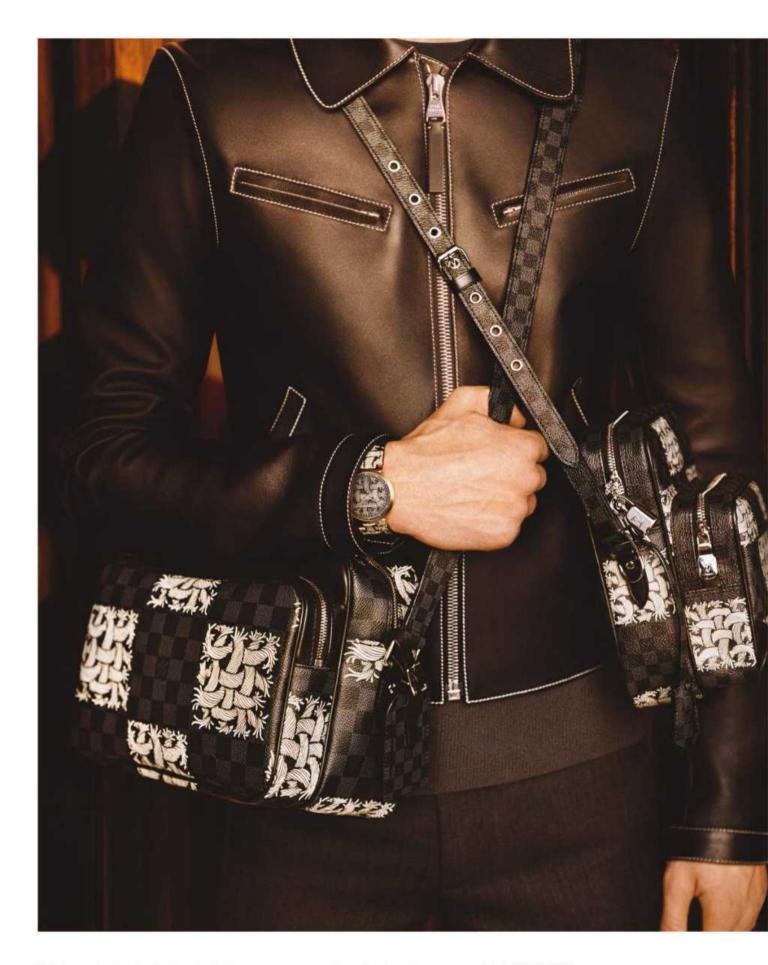


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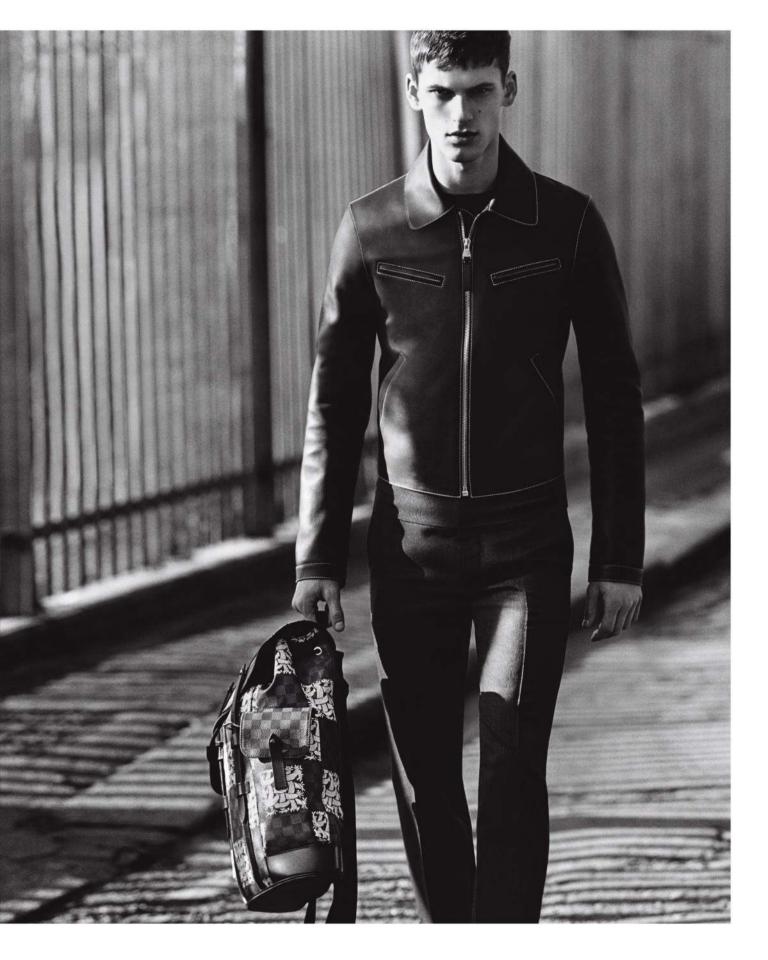


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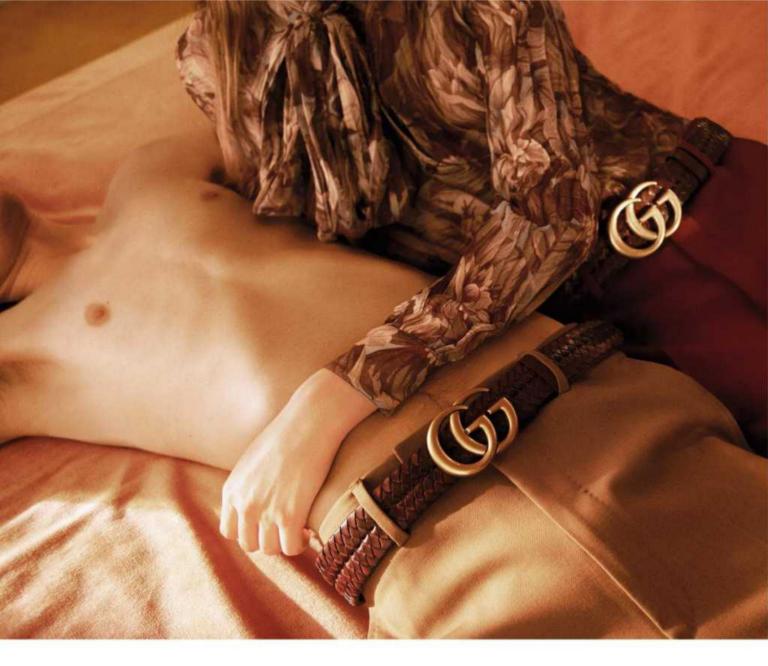
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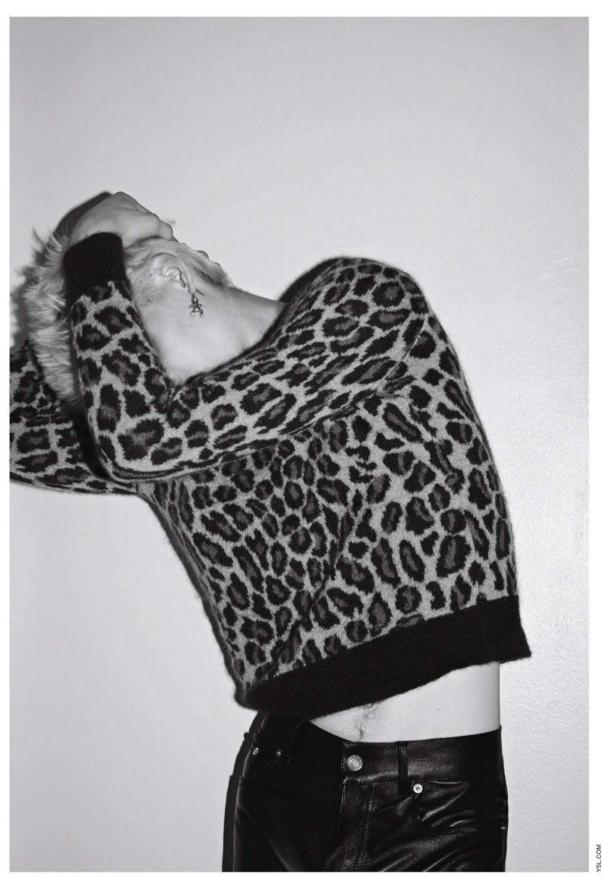
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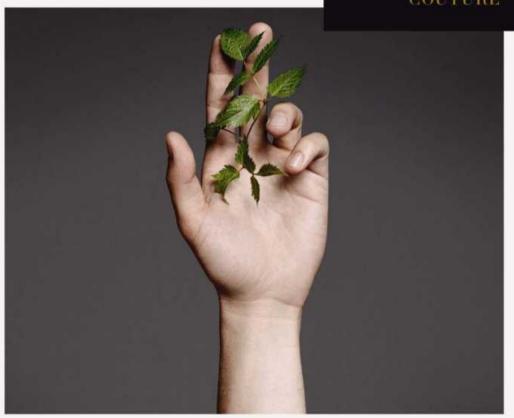
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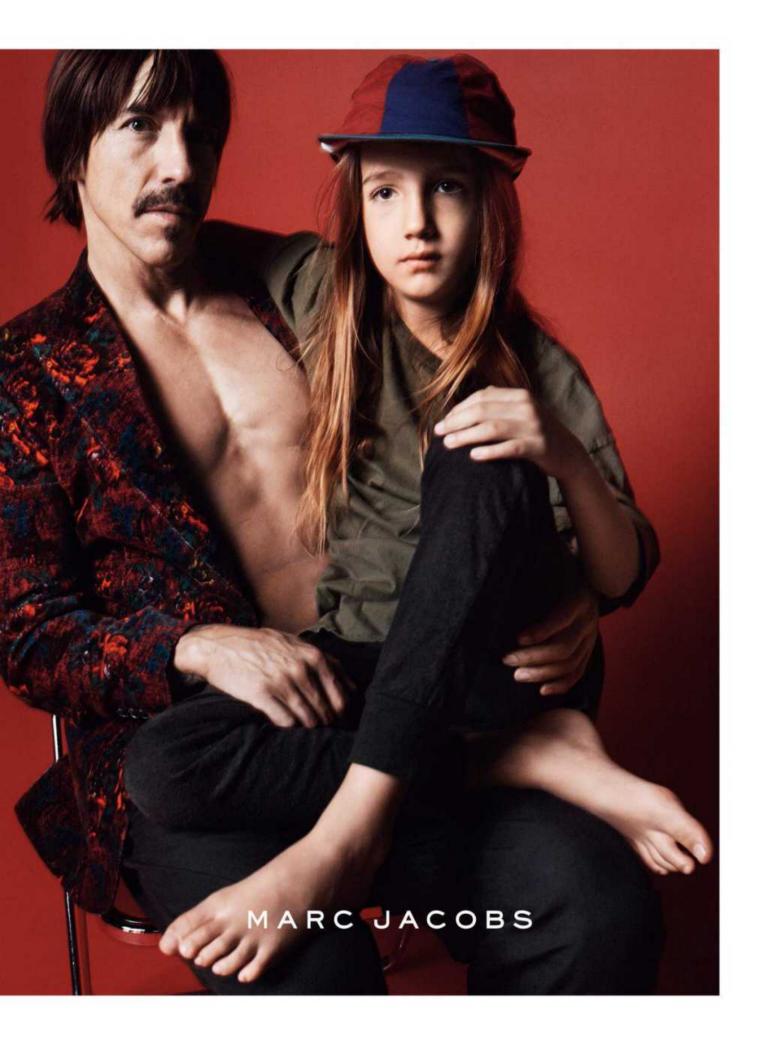
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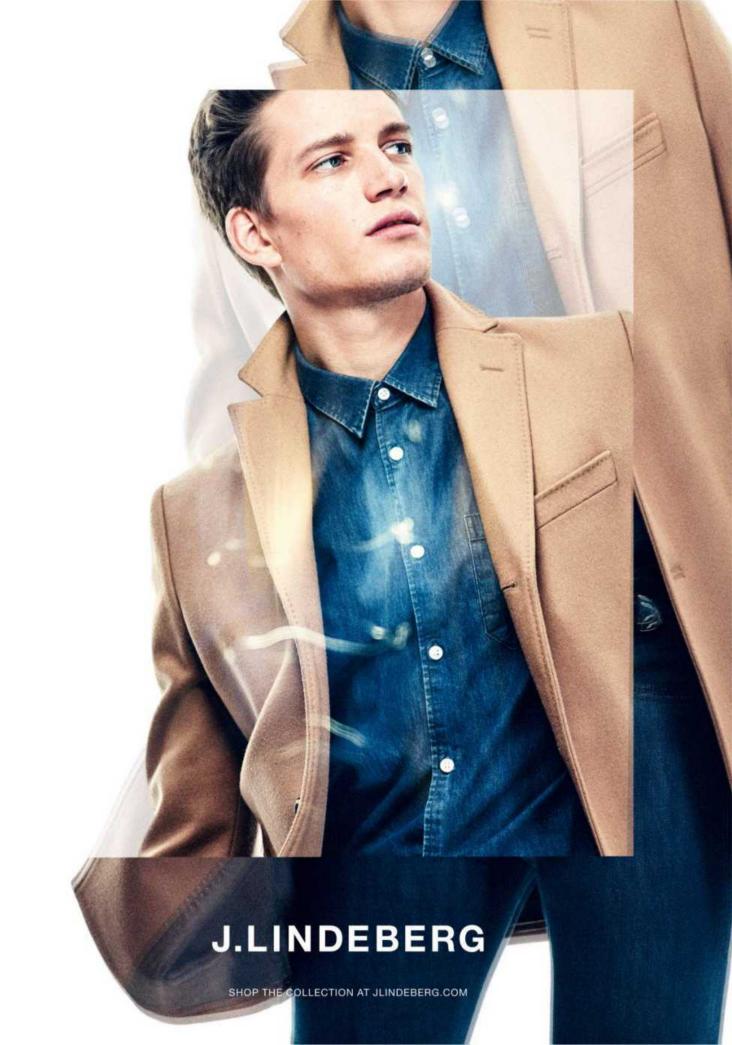












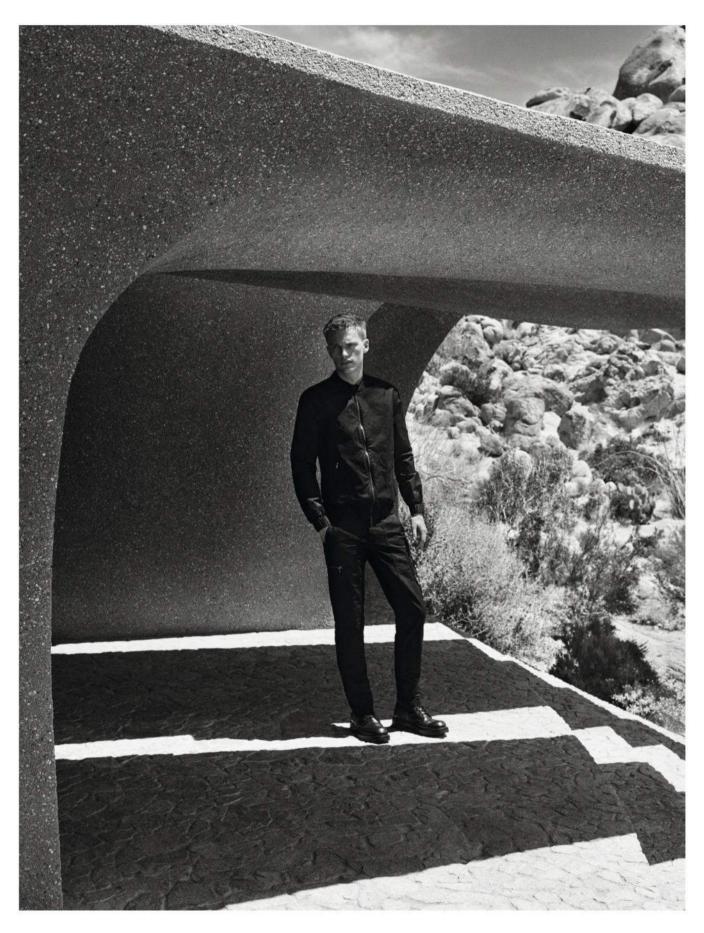






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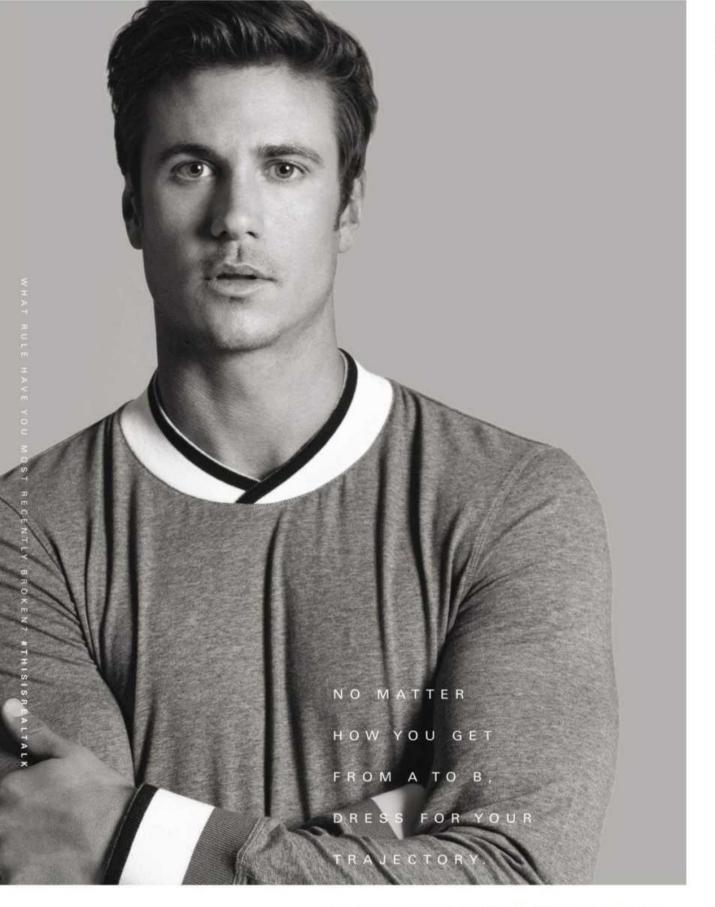
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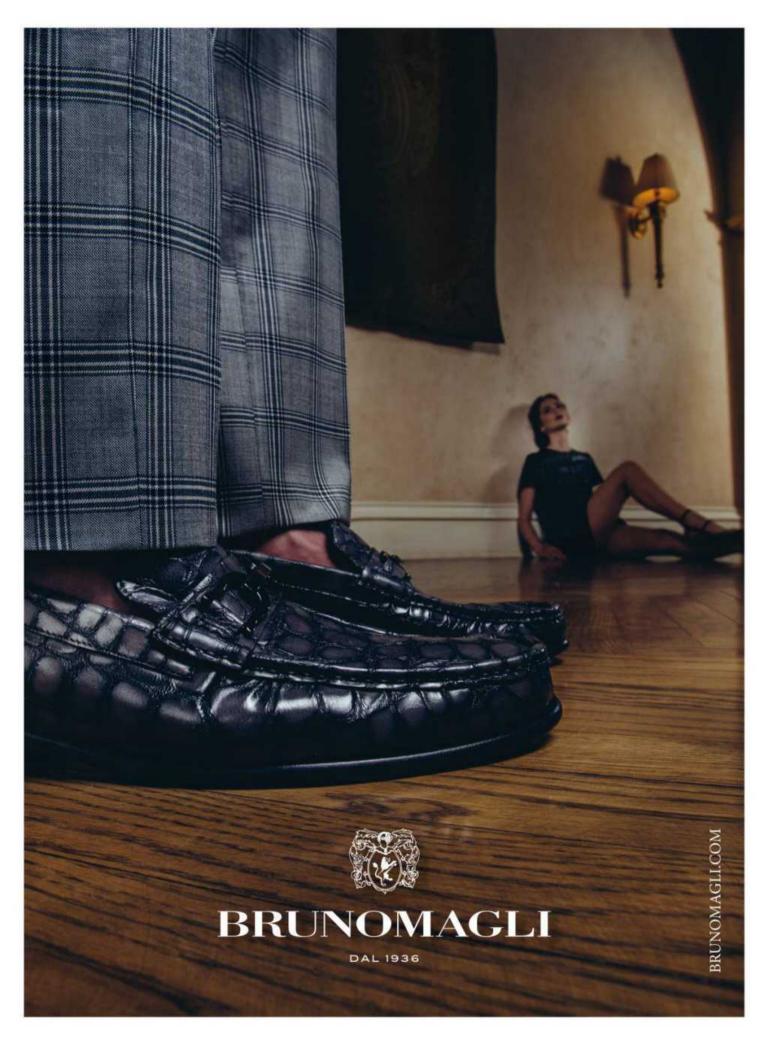
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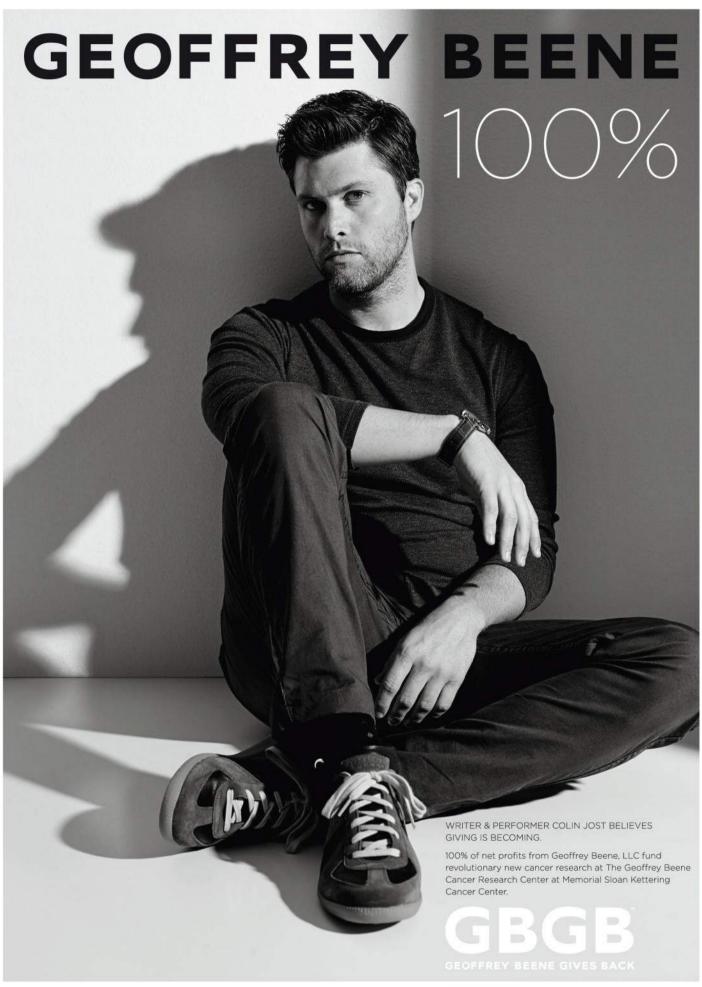


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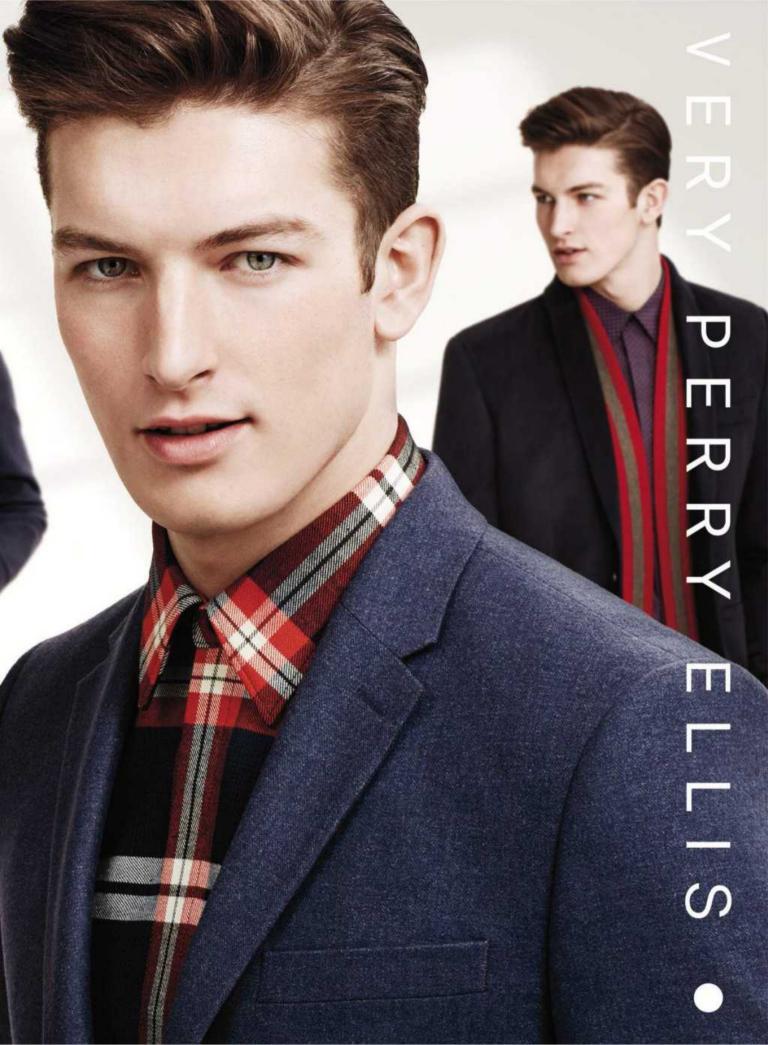
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GQ INSIDER SPOTLIGHT:

GARY WILLIAMS JR.

PHOTOGRAPHER & BLOGGER WASHINGTON D.C.

Take us inside your world—what do you do and what types of projects are you working on?

Photography has always been my core passion. I'm based in Washington D.C., but I often travel for work. When I'm not working, I find myself exploring different cities or countries, capturing a collection of images that I hope gives new perspective to the world around us. I'll be showcasing this collection in D.C. later in the year. I also really want to share and grow in the creative community, so I am starting a curated monthly dinner series in D.C. The dinners will serve as a way to build camaraderie and relationships between local creative and business types.

FOLLOW GARY: @MASTERWILLIAMS / MASTERWILLIAMSLIFE.COM

How does GQ influence your style?

I've always been interested in fashion, but it wasn't until my college years (and a gifted subscription to GQ) that I began to find myself stylistically. The first issue I read had a Kanye story that highlighted the trend of pastel polo shirts with popped collars. I was hooked. My cousin and I started a blog that featured street-style photos we shot in Philly on the weekends, when street fashion was just beginning to blossom. But I've come a long way since then, and GQ has fostered that journey. I went from mimicking exactly what I saw in the magazine, to creating my own look. That's the great thing about GQ—it's a resource that guides you toward establishing your own personal style.



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TIME IS THE ESSENCE WE ARE MADE OF

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Our cheat sheet to everything you need to see, hear, and read this month, from Emily Blunt's cartel flick to the arrival of soul-stirring singer Leon Bridges

Could a Middle-Aged White Man Ever Become President? Martin O'Malley is running for the White House

Martin O'Malley is running for the White House against the Hillary Industrial Complex. Good luck
BY JASON ZENGERLE

The Soho House Plan for World Domination

The members-only Soho House is expanding worldwide and has its eyes set on all you "creatives" BY ALICE GREGORY

You'll Never Power-Lunch in This Town Again

What does the closing of New York's Four Seasons say about our ruling class? BY ROBERT DRAPER

176 Pablo Escobar Will Never Die

Colombia's infamous drug lord has become its greatest tourist draw. JESSE KATZ pays a visit to Pablo-land

Jussie Smollett, who plays one of the brothers on *Empire*, takes break from all that sibling rivalry.

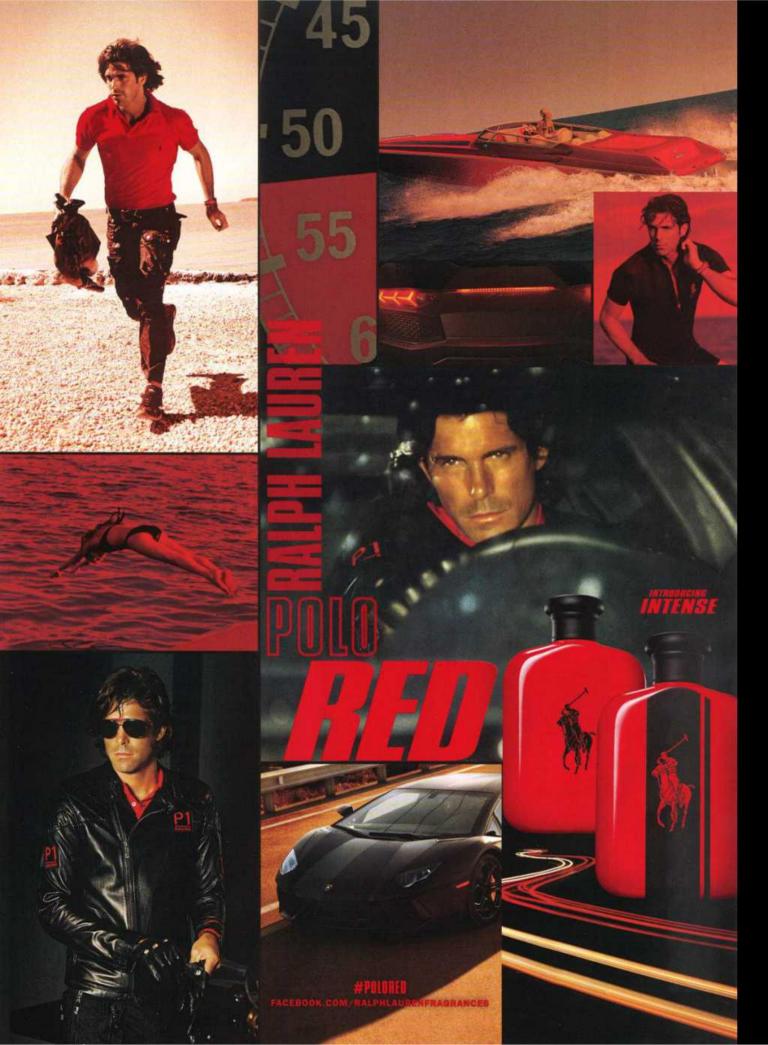
Hoodie, \$120, by Banana Republic. Jacket, \$5,800, and jeans, \$840, by Dier Homme. Boots, \$795, by Bally. Bracelet by Cartier. Watch by TAG Heuer. Hotel: Chicago Athletic Association.

PEGGY SIROTA



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G Sept

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from Greece, Corsica, and
beyond BY ALAN RICHMAN Daniel Wolfe Is Killing Himself Live on Facebook A Marine vet's death played out, unimaginably, over a series of socialmedia posts. ZACH BARON pieces together the end WILL DAVIDSON 62 GQ.COM SEPTEMBER

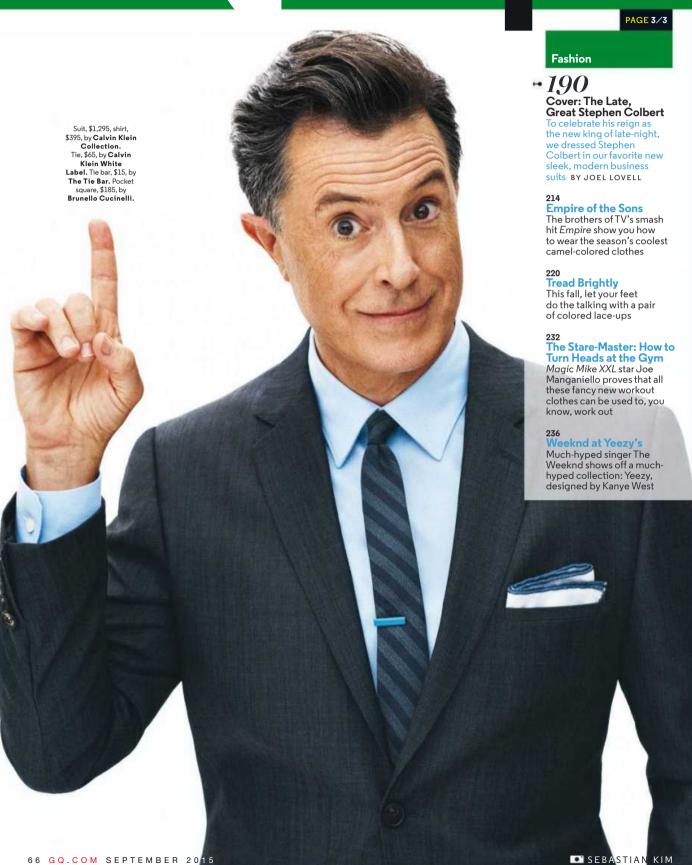
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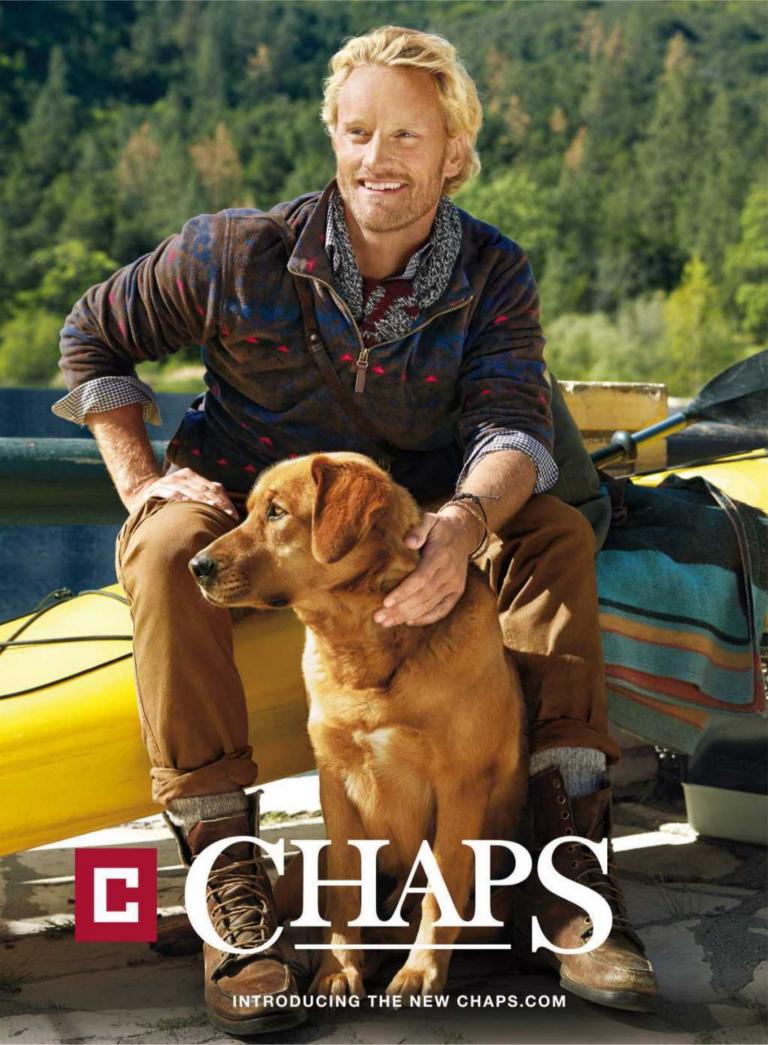






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Sixteen

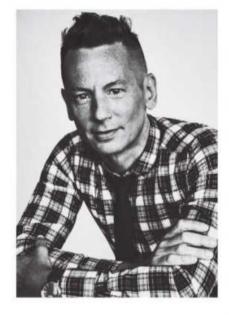
YOU KNOW THOSE MOMENTS senior year in college, maybe, or your first great relationship when you just want to slow time, to stand outside yourself and appreciate your life and the sweet possibilities before you? That's how I feel about the Republican presidential campaign. SIXTEEN candidates! Sixteen people who will tear each other apart for the next year, like vicious caterwauling hyenas. So much fun! I hope it never ends.

Keep 'em coming, because this is like Christmas, when people show up and you don't even know who they are.

How does the brain even process the joy? Or even the names?! We've been playing a game around the office where we quiz each other and ask how many of the candidates we can rattle off. I usually stop after Sleepy, Snoozy, Sleazy, and Bush.

Obviously we're gonna need some help remembering each of them. With that in mind, I've given you a handy field guide, so you can bone up and prepare for Death Race 2016. Just trying to help!

Handles



Donald Trump: He's the one with the hair who hates Mexicans

Mike Huckabee: He's the one without the hair who hates Mexicans

Jeb Bush: He's the one who claimed to be Latino. *No es latino*

Marco Rubio: He's the one who would shut down the border

Chris Christie: He's the one who would shut down bridges

Scott Walker: He's the one who would shut down government

Rick Perry: He's the one who would shut down government but can't remember which parts

Carly Fiorina: She's the only one of these who's actually run a business into the ground

Rand Paul: He's the paranoid one who's worried we're going to merge with Mexico and Canada

Ted Cruz: He's the one from Canada

Lindsey Graham: He's the one who's single and said he would have a series of "rotating" First Ladies. Kinda like a rotisserie

Rick Santorum: He's the one who called Obama a "snob"

Ben Carson: He's the one who called Obama a "psychopath"

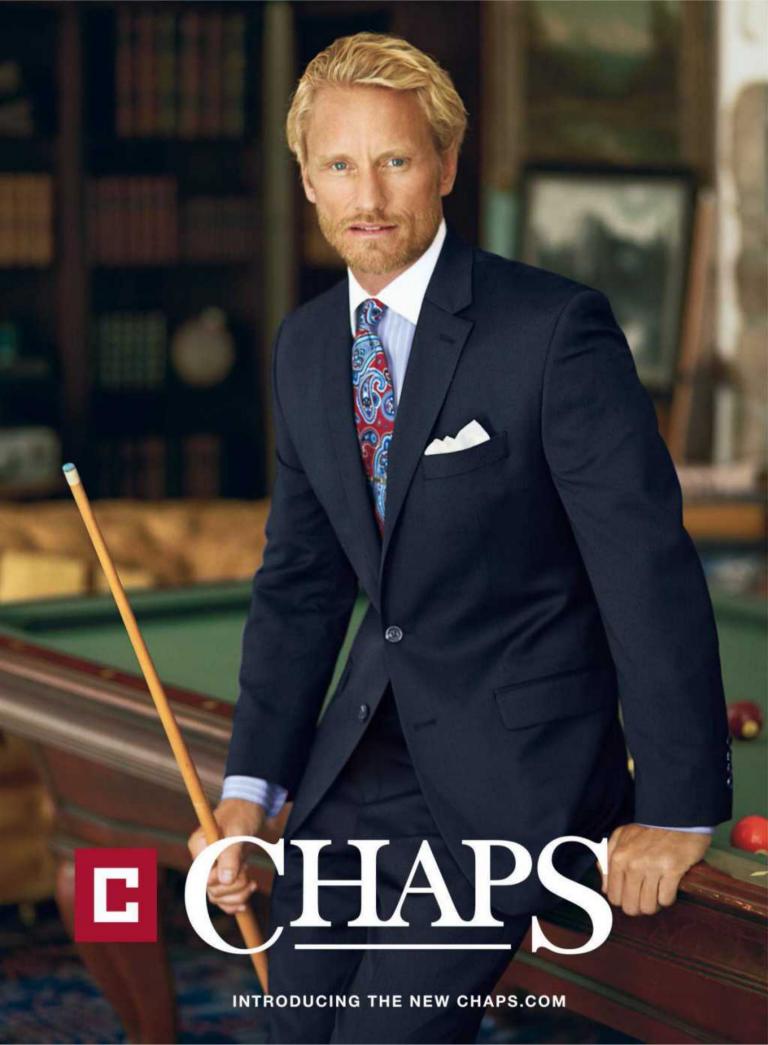
John Kasich: He's the one who will never be president

Bobby Jindal: He's the one who will never be vice president

George Pataki: I have no idea who this guy is

JIM NELSON

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF





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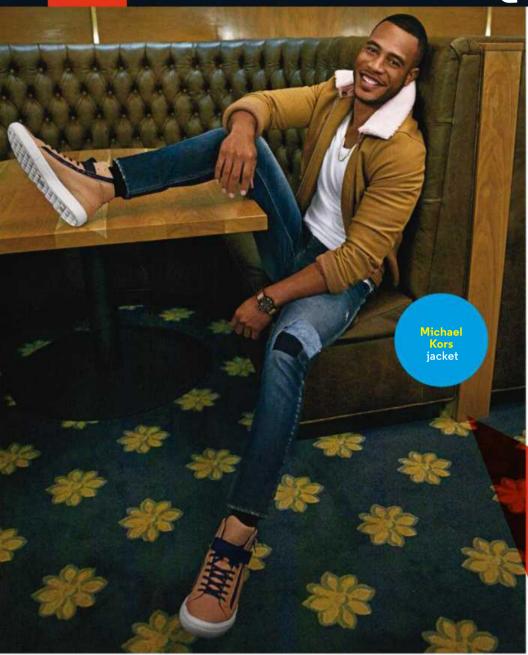
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Just a few of our picks from this issue...



Oliver Peoples sunglasses p. 92



Common Projects shoe p. 220



Visvim jacket p. 94



Gucci sweater p. 215











The GQ Style Guy



Allow me to introduce myself...

As an 8-year-old, I wore my dad's blazers to class. Freshman year, I joined the debate team because we could wear suits instead of the Catholic-school uniform. In college I worked under menswear maestro Sid Mashburn in Atlanta, and for the past four years I've been sponging style knowledge from Jim Moore and *GQ*'s fashion team. I've gone through a Jordans phase, a suit-every-day phase, a dark-and-drapey phase. Point is, I'm not here to enforce the style rules of our grandfathers, nor to hype every fad. Like you, I'm just here to figure out how a man can look good *now*.

The GQ Style Guy Is In! Send questions to styleguy@GQ.com or tweet @GQStyleGuy

Meet Mark
Anthony Green,
the style columnist
and Twitter guru
you can lean on for
tips, questions,
and, yes, man-bun
rulings

I have an oddshaped head. It makes hat shopping difficult and indecisive. Any advice for me? » It took me five years to find a pair of sunglasses that fit my face. What'd I do in the interim? Squint like hell. If you can't find a hat suited to your dome. don't settle. Keep looking. Swing by your local old-school hat shop and make your odd head their problem. Those guys live for challenges like that.

When will the man bun be over?

» I hope not soon! I think it's badass, and black dudes haven't cracked it yet. It's not officially cool until then. I won't be the brave one who grows out my locks to desegregate the trend. Maybe Jaden Smith? That kid has the juice.

My friend fastens both buttons of his sports jacket. I suggested he undo the bottom, but he said GQ called it cool. That true? >> As Denzelplaying-Malcolm X said: Ya been had Ya been took. Ya been hoodwinked. Bamboozled. Your friend lied-we would never endorse using a jacket's bottom button. See, a well-tailored jacket makes an X shape when it's buttoned right. That's where its power lies. Button the bottom and it looks like vou're exploding out of the jacket. Tell your pal our lawyers will be reaching out with a cease and desist.



De-Boot Your Closet

If you're like me and have stacks of gear you never touch—like unworn kicks or a jacket that doesn't quite fit—then ship it all to eBay's new valet (sellforme.ebay.com). Fashion-head sellers snap pro-grade pics, and I'm happy to pay the service's vig (20 to 40 percent) to save the hassle and the closet space.





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THE MAKING OF A CHAMPION

PRESENTED EXPRESS+STEPHEN CURRY

hen Stephen Curry was in the eighth grade, he notched exactly zero points in his middle school basketball team's first game of the season—a now-unthinkable stat line for the sport's reigning MVP and all-world scorer. The young baller's lack of buckets wasn't the result of a cold shooting streak or a shutdown defense, however. Curry didn't score simply because he didn't play, and he didn't play because he didn't do the dishes. That was just the way things were in the Curry household. »



"Growing up in Charlotte, basketball was everywhere," the 27-year-old Curry, whose father, Dell, played 16 years in the NBA, says of his early years, "but my parents always made sure we had our priorities straight. Basketball was a privilege, and it could be taken away."

The importance of elbow grease wasn't the only lesson Curry learned from his folks. They also encouraged him to follow his passion, whatever it may have been. "My dad didn't want me to be a basketball player just because he was. I had to kind of find it for myself." But once he found it, they encouraged him to give it his all—to "go for it," as he remembers—like that summer Curry and his father spent two long, arduous months doing nothing but reworking his jump shot in the driveway.

Even with a revamped jumper—now recognized as one of the most deadly hair-trigger shots of all time—there was no guarantee that Curry would ever turn pro. He was considered undersized, was barely scouted out of high school, and has had injuries threaten to derail his career. To this day the former first-round pick identifies as an underdog, and has the work ethic to prove it. "It's

kind of what fueled me to get to the pros from middle school," recalls Curry, who has been known to shoot 1,000 shots before practice, and insists his most basic goal is to always outwork his opponent. "I don't think I've reached my full potential," he says, which is a scary thought for the rest of the league.

Having grown up with such a supportive and tightly knit clan, family remains a priority for Curry, who started his own at an early age. (He and his wife have two young daughters.) "Family is everything to me," Curry says, noting a new appreciation for the values his parents instilled in him and his siblings. Case in point: The Curry family always found time to volunteer at a variety of organizations, from computer learning centers and homeless shelters to food banks, and the All-Star guard has continued that charitable work, supporting such causes as military appreciation and the fight against malaria.

Of course, Curry also knows how to cut loose, admitting he might be the goofiest guy in his family. "I hide it well when I'm out in public," he says, laughing. Meanwhile, in the locker room, Curry has earned a reputation for practical jokes,

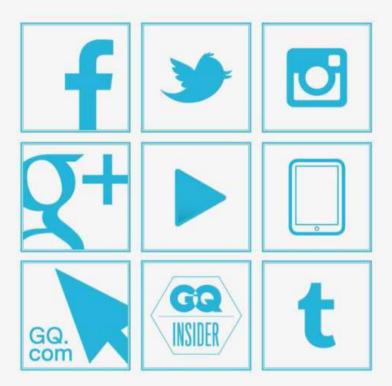
BASKETBALL WAS A PRIVILEGE, AND IT COULD BE TAKEN AWAY.

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• The ever expanding GQ universe makes a mark all month long. We've got the most impactful moments, distilled.



· Heleine Tchayou, Charly's mother

A Victim's Family—and the LAPD—Respond

→ Jeff Sharlet's story "The Invisible Man" (July) investigated the death of Charly Keunang, a man shot by police in March. After the article ran, Los Angeles Police Commission president Steve Soboroff reportedly asked the inspector general to comb through the story. Charly's sister, Line, wrote to Sharlet: "Incredible story. This job was done not because you're a journalist but because you are one of those people who support justice."



Let Us Put Our Words in Your In-Box

→ In a recent story on Contently, writer Shane Snow called our newsletters "the best e-mails ever" and addressed our newsletter staff directly: "Whoever you are, I am prepared to propose drinks and/or marriage." Shane (and others!), we will grace your in-box until unsubscription do us part. Sign up at GQ.com.



Welcome, NBA Class of 2015!

- → To celebrate the most exciting new players in the league, we set up a photo booth at draft day on June 25. The most dapper of the bunch ended up on our Instagram (@GQ) and may well end up in the magazine in coming years.
- Clockwise from top left, Karl-Anthony Towns, D'Angelo Russell, and Justise Winslow





The Most Stylish Polarizing Man

→ A few of our picks for the Most Stylish Men Alive (July)—Brad Pitt, Kanye, Pharrell—sparked a healthy debate among readers, but none caused such a kerfuffle as Harry Styles.



"Stop this madness. He dresses like a homeless boy who needs a bath." —Allyson Petrocci Larralde via Facebook

"He dresses like a lesbian in the '80s." —Craig Gibson via Facebook

"Poor imitation of Mick Jagger with a little bit of the worst Depp." —massi life via GQ.com





"Unlike Justin Bieber he doesn't have to take his shirt off to prove anything." —@jamorim1078 via Twitter

"Who else could ever compete with that kind of raw, natural style?"—Lucia Ennis via Sugarscape

"He is perfection." —@ lam Brenda via Twitter

gq prefers that letters to the editor be sent to letters@gq.com. LETTERS MAY BE EDITED.



Magic City: Now More Magical

→ Our article and video doc "Make It Reign" (July) took filmmaker Lauren Greenfield and GQ's Devin Friedman to the Atlanta strip club that's transforming hip-hop. We called up DJ Esco. its resident music maker. to find out how people have responded.

66 The whole hip-hop industry, they're aoina crazu on it. I can't get it off my timeline.... You have to come see it for yourself. I'm getting people saying, 'I've never wanted to go to Magic City more than I do now.' It's getting crazy."













 \rightarrow 2 of 3

The New Business Casual

We're not saying break the dress code. We're just saying that with the right moves, you can bend it to your will

Tuesday

Get By with a Little Help from Your Crew

• Have you noticed lately that wearing a V-neck sweater with a jacket feels a little...junior accountant? Pulling a crewneck over a shirt and tie gets you closer to the loosened-up look you're aiming for—one that says, "I'm put together, but

I'm not delivering a PowerPoint." Just do it right. A low-key crewneck with a graphic stripe? Perfect. Your trusty used-to-be-gray hole-ridden alumni sweatshirt? Save that for the gym.

Sports jacket, \$3,460, and tie, \$295, by Brunello Cucinelli. Sweater, \$400, by Moncler. Shirt, \$290, by Thom Browne New York. Jeans, \$70, by Calvin Klein Jeans. Shoes, \$225, by Florsheim Imperial.

In Praise of Going Gray

• You've been staring into your closet for ten minutes, partly because inspiration hasn't struck and partly because last night's boozy Tinder date became this morning's awkward Tinder good-bye. Steal a move from peacocky dudes like Russell Westbrook and go monochromatic. In this case, you're dressing head to toe in gray—the one color you have covered, from the denim to the sweater to the sport coat. When you're done, you'll look impeccable, not hungover.



3 90 GQ.COM/SEPTEMBER 2015

Wednesday

Outdress Your Start-up's Investor in Four Easy Steps

Tie None On

No meetings with the CEO means you can loosen up a little. The only thing sleeker than wearing a knit tie? Wearing an invisible one.

Bombs Away

Everyone should own a simple suede bomber jacket, for two reasons. First, it's the street-savvy version of a sport coat, refined but not stuffy. Second, because the office manager always cranks the A/C to arctic temps.

3 Chill on Top, Business Below

A pinstriped suit gives off banker vibes. But pinstriped pants? There's a reason the Sex Pistols and the Yankees have always looked so good.

Sneak into Work

If you can leave the suit at home, you can leave the leather-soled oxfords there, too. Especially since you can lace up sneakers of the leather and logo-less variety that look every bit as smart—but leave your dogs happier at the end of the day.

Jacket, \$1,200, by J.Lindeberg. Shirt, \$250, by Salvatore Piccolo. Pants, \$165, by Gant Rugger. Sneakers, \$390, by Umit Benan. Where to buy it? Go to GQ.com/go/fashiondirectories



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PAL ZILERI

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FIGRNO









The New Business Casual

Thursday

This Is How You Upgrade from Old Man to Bold Man

• The shirt-tiecardigan trio can quickly veer Mister Rogers. The trick to staying in the right neighborhood: Keep the sweater trim and the tie slim, and turn up the volume on the pants. See those tiny checks? That's how you put a pattern on your bottom half without looking like a golfer at the British Open.

And when it comes to the cardigan, learn from the old guy: Pick a bolder, brighter color so your pants don't get all the attention.



Cardigan, \$650, and shirt, \$295, by Burberry London. Tie, \$19, and tie bar, \$15, by The Tie Bar. Pants, \$1,395, by Tom Ford.

The Office-Ready Rainbow

• Every guy feels safe in navy blue—it's the no-brainer, goes-with-everything, won't-earn-stares safe choice. Which makes it the boring choice, too. So refresh your closet's color palette by acquainting yourself with navy's extended family: dusty teal, cobalt, chambray blue. They're how you stand out in a sea of, well, men dressed like the sea.





Friday

Now's the Time to Stick Your Neck Out

 You know that old saying that you should dress for the job you want, not the job you have? Well, when Friday rolls around, dress like you want to become a legendarily stylish Italian fabric magnate. Veer toward blue and brown tones, an elegant combo that always, always works. Look for an unstructured jacket with a perfect-for-Friday

relaxed shoulder. And don't fear the turtleneck— it's nothing special in Milan, which means it has just enough attitude to break out on this side of the Atlantic. Add a pair of shades and smile: You've just won the suitless workweek.



Sports jacket, \$1,100, by Bottega Veneta. Turtleneck, \$145, by DKNY. Jeans, \$185, by A.P.C. Belt by Brunello Cucinelli. Pocket square by The Tie Bar. Sunglasses by Oliver Peoples. Where to buy it? Go to GQ.com/go/fashiondirectories



CLÉMENT SHOT AT ELSTREE FILM STUDIOS, LONDON - APRIL 10TH 2015 TEL: 1 844 44-BALLY - BALLY.COM - SWISS DESIGN SINCE 1851







Patch Yourself Up

The menswear world is finally catching on to what bikers and Boy Scouts have known all along: Everything looks cooler when it's packed with patches







My eighth-grade class was filled with Wite-Out artists, all of us daubing study-hall doodles and coded shout-outs to crushes on our boringly clean backpacks. Which weren't so far from these patched-over pieces of Americana—officially "a thing" and one we can't get enough of at *GQ*. Whether you pick up Visvim's Travis Bickle—esque ideal of an M65 jacket or DIY your own badge-laden jeans, you're buying into the belief that intentionally imperfect is actually the best kind of perfect.—JON WILDE





M

Best New Designers '15

The "G" in Gap Is Short for GQ

The anointed are coming! This month, our four Best New Menswear Designers will launch the fourth annual GQ capsule collection at Gap stores. And because you're cool, you get a behind-the-scenes peek at the lineup before anyone else

The Hill-Side





Quality Goods, Now in Higher Quantity
WHY WE LOVE 'EM:
The brothers Corsillo are all about fetishworthy pieces made with a fanatical attention to detail.
WHAT TO EXPECT:
Wool sneakers, camo-lined tote bags, square-bottom ties—plus the complete look you see here.
THEIR TAKE:
One lift metarials

"Quality materials are our hallmark," says Emil Corsillo, "so it wouldn't have made sense to come out with a Gap collection that's been taken down five notches. We nitpicked to find the quality we always look for."

NSF





A Wardrobe with a Dirty Mind

WHY WE LOVE 'EM: Nick Friedberg and Jamie Haller deliver beat-to-hell denim. chinos, and tees. WHAT TO EXPECT: NSF's whole Gap collaboration (which includes a mean buffalo plaid shirt) has a lived-in, SoCal feel. These dyesplotched trousers were inspired by the Dickies that founder Nick Friedberg wore as a skate rat in Los Angeles. THEIR TAKE: "Our stuff's not much of a departure," says Friedberg. "We took what Gap does and beat it up, distressed it, got it all dirty."

Stampd





Streetwear, Meet Sportswear

WHY WE LOVE HIM: Because we're not entirely sure if Chris Stamp's stuff is for the gym or for brunch. (So we wear it to both.) WHAT TO EXPECT: Clothes like this shorts-and-leggings combo are built for a restless, goanywhere twentyfirst century where impromptu meetings are as likely to take place at a coffee shop as in a conference room. HIS TAKE: "Gap is all about that classic Americana lookand then we wanted to give it our edge."

David Hart

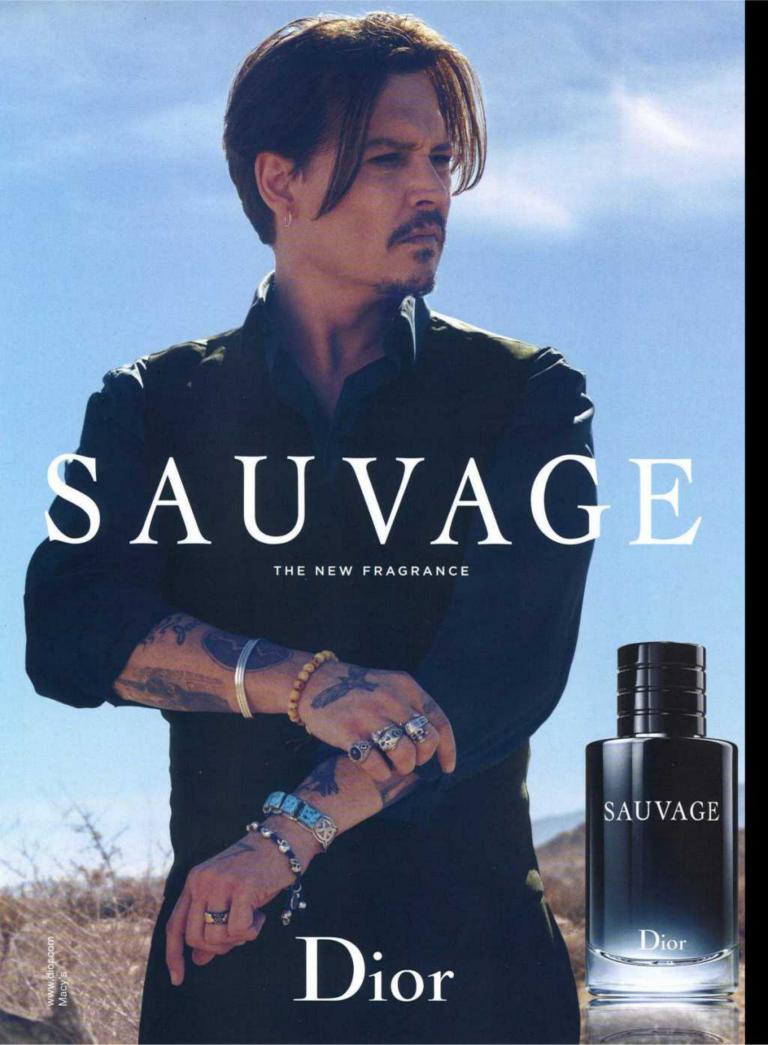




The Rebirth of Doo-Wop Cool WHY WE LOVE HIM:

For his unapologetic geezer sensibility, which brings the '50s swinging back to life. WHAT TO EXPECT:

Proper raincoats. Tweed blazers. Horizontal-striped neckties. Oh, and retro polos like the ones Ĥart's granddad used to wear. HIS TAKE: "We've been making these polos since the beginning, so it's only natural we'd do one for Gap. It's the kind of thing you can throw on to go golfing, or go to the beach, or go for a drive."



Dior



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GREATS



ANDERSON'S



POLO RALPH LAUREN

CLUB MONACO



Special Section

Photographs by Jason Kim

1 of 3 \rightarrow

Tattoo You: GQ's Guide to Regret-Free Ink There was a time, not that long ago, when the only people you knew with tattoos were baristas and Vietnam vets. That time is long gone, thanks to SoHo-level artists working the guns and a whole new style of impressive ink they're churning out. (Wave good-bye to the waving mermaids.) Here's where to go and who to know when you join the tattooed class

SAPPHIRE

Vapour Infused with Beautiful Botanicals from the Ends of the Earth

IN THE EAST OF JAVA IN SEARCH OF CUBEB BERRIES Occis Iris Root) From Italy



Cubeb Berrie. From Java









Almonds

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INSPIRATION IS EVERYWHERE

WILL POWER Inspired by travel





Special Section

 $2 \text{ of } 3 \rightarrow$

Regret-Free Ink





This Ink Is SFW



In most offices, at least. But if visible tattoos are still off-limits at your stuffy nine-to-five, take some advice from Tom (that's him at left), a banker with a body full of art-and bosses who will never know about it. First: No wearing a white dress shirt without an undershirt. Second: Keep your collar buttoned to the top. (Hey, the air tie is in!) And finally: Be wary of picnic-chic company outings. "I could still get away with a short-sleeve collar shirt, but I gotta wear pants. It's a small price to pay."

The 4 Levels of Inked-up Office Acceptability



* Kevin Durant

1. The Secret Garden
Keep your tats relegated
to your torso and your
sponsors will never know.
BEST FOR: basketball
players. hedge-funders.



2. The Barista
Patchwork
A line drawing here,
your lover's name the

■ Brad Pitt

your lover's name there.

BEST FOR: creative
directors, young
architects.



David Beckham3. The Bike-Messenger

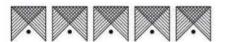
Sleeves
You're sending a signal
that even a double-breasted

that even a double-breaste suit can't cover. BEST FOR: drummers, actual tattoo artists.



← Gucci Mane

4. The Bad Decision You have an ice cream cone on your face. BEST FOR: Gucci Mane, felons.



The New Look That Killed the Tribal Tat (Thank God)

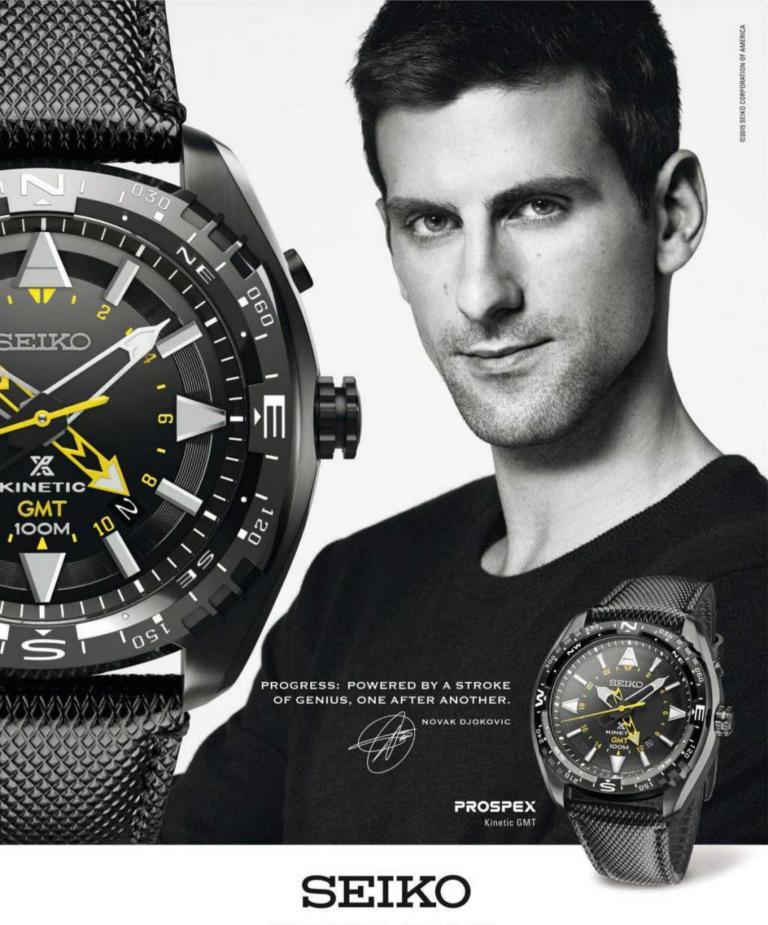
Meet Roxx, the San Francisco artist whose "organic geometry" style is taking over arms and legs worldwide.



"I'm really into stripped-down sophistication. Organic geometry is taking things down

to a microscopic level—
the structure of leaves and shells. Sometimes the simplest forms have such a great impact. People who come to me are people that really didn't want to get tattooed that much. People who don't have a lot of tattoos, or any at all, and then get huge things. They saw my work and something changed."





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Special Section

3 of 3 ←

Regret-Free Ink





to Be the Deepest

· The worst thing you can do with a first tattoo-besides kanji-is overthink it. (Tip: That frequently involves kanji.) A first tat should be more a design flourish than a visual history of your personality; you can get into those later, when you find an artist you can trust. For now, keep it small and place it on your chest or upper biceps so you'll get used to showing it off at the beach. And remember: The bigger your first is, the harder it'll be to cover when you go down the rabbit hole.

Don't Ask



If you're going to start getting ink, the first thing you should know is that people are going to ask you about your ink. Depending on the backstory, maybe you'll want to oblige, because it's nice that they're curious. But anyone asking, "What does your tattoo mean? is missing the point. Not every piece has a story-and vou're not obligated to share if it does. When you decide to get more tattoos, a shift happens: The tattoos stop having deep significances and drawn-out stories and become more about the

artist, the time in vour life you got it, the impulsiveness or the long wait while you saved un cash. I view my tattoos as panels of a larger mural-some I spent years working on, some exist only because I woke up one morning and thought, "I want to get a new tattoo." The way I see it. if I want to show them off or talk about them, I will. If someone has to ask. I probably don't. Besides, most of the time, the answer is a conversation killer, anyway: "I just like the way it looks. -GARRETT MUNCE

"Six out of ten fingers are done by Dr. Woo," says Garcia. "The fingers and hand hurt the most-100 percent the most painful."

Just One Is Fine. So Is One Hundred.

Just ask En Noir designer He's covered from scalp to finger, including dozens from ink-man to the stars, Dr. Woo.

I've always been into Renaissance and Baroqueera art. That's what I started with. My main two artists are definitely Dr. Woo and Jun Cha-they're unbelievable. With Dr. Woo. it's amazing little detailed tattoos—like on my knuckles-that he knocks out in twenty to thirty minutes. With Jun Cha, he wants at least half your arm, or a back piece. It's a process."



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SIMON LOOKBOOK

JOIN US THIS FALL when we bring the pages of the Simon lookbook to life and explore the fall season's hottest trends at LOOKBOOK LIVE events. Simon LOOKBOOK LIVE is an interactive trend showcase from the style pros at GQ, Glamour and Simon, the name behind the nation's leading shopping destinations.

PHOTOGRAPHY: SABINA LOUISE PIERCE, BEN ROSE, RAY ZIMMERMAN









EVENTS NEAR YOU

SAN DIEGO, CA 9/19 FASHION VALLEY

CHARLOTTE, NC 9/26 SOUTHPARK

BOCA RATON, FL 10/3 TOWN CENTER AT BOCA RATON

> LONG ISLAND, NY 10/10 ROOSEVELT FIELD







FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE FALL EVENTS, VISIT SIMON.COM/LOOKBOOKLIVE









What the Health?

The Main Ingredient in Juice Is B.S.

seems like everyone, everywhere, is gulping cold-pressed juice packed with leafy greens and big promises. But it turns out that this crazy-expensive salad water isn't doing our bodies many favors

We desperately

wanted to believe in

the cold-pressed-

juice craze. At first,

each bottle seemed

the direction of our

pill future, but with

flavor still intact. So

we're very sorry to report that those

fancy juices lining

the coolers of your

supposed to make

you feel stronger,

age slower than

think smarter, and

George Clooney-are

your wallet, polluting

actually hijacking

the environment,

making you fatter.

More specifically...

and probably

lunch spot-the ones

favorite bougie

like a big nutrient-

packed leap in

Jetsonian food-

all the delicious

fruit-and-veggie



Each sixteen-ounce bottle of kale-gingerwhatever requires several-sometimes five or more-pounds of produce, which has been pulverized to squeeze the liquid from the weighty, fibrous pulp. Except here's the thing: Fiber is a crucial benefit of fruits and vegetables. 'Fiber keeps you regular, clears cholesterol out of your system, maintains blood-sugar levels and helps prevent food cravings and energy crashes," explains Danielle LaFata, a former dietitian for the U.S. Men's Soccer Team. So if you're missing out on all that stuff, what are you actually drinking?



 There's a healthy way to juice—it involves a blender. Try this smoothie recipe from Steven Satterfield, the veggie-loving executive chef at Miller Union in Atlanta.

2 cups loosely packed greens . (arugula, kale, spinach, or a mix)

cup frozen blue fruit (blueberries. blackberries. or a mix)

cup frozen red fruit (strawberries, raspberries)

cup frozen yellow/orange fruit (peaches, mangoes, pineapple)

1½ cups unsweetened milk alternative (preferably flax or hemp milk)

> Thsn. unsweetened organic hemp protein powder (available at ThriveMarket .com)



You're drinking expensive sugar

To cite one example. a seventeen-ounce apple-lemon-ginger juice from L.A.-based Juice Served Here contains forty-eight grams of sugar. (A can of Coke has thirtynine.) Divorced from tough-to-digest fiber, the sugar dumps straight into your bloodstream. So that's why you feel euphoric after downing a juiceit's not a health kick, it's a sugar high.

Vitamins don't work that way

Say you buy an \$11 bottle of The Romanian, a green juice from Juice Press in New York

City, which claims to have 50 percent of your daily vitamin A requirement. The problem is that fat-soluble vitamins like A need to be consumed with fat for your body to efficiently absorb them. The Romanian's fat content: zero grams.

"Green" juice ain't so green

For a supposedly feel-good product, bottled juice can be astoundingly ecocrappy, what with all the plastic packaging, necessary cooling, and tossed-off pulp. Still determined to glug your veggies? It's more nutritiousand cheaper, and less wasteful-to buy some farmers'market produce and blend up a fibery smoothie at home (see above). Or man up and chew your salad.-MARJORIE KORN

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Travel

The Coolest Island in the U.S. of A.

From the moment you touch down on Kauai, the lushest, most peaceful chunk of Hawaii, you'll realize the trek was worth it. So go now, before everyone else figures it out, too

To fly to Hawaii from the continental U.S. is to be reminded, midair, just how far those little islands are from the motherland. They're a solid six hours west from Los Angeles. Halfway



to Japan, even. And Kauai, the roundish little island at the tiptop of the Hawaiian archipelago, is not only literally but conceptually the most distant of all—as far as you can get from the Vacation Inc.™ vibes of Maui and Oahu. Then you land, and all of paradise is suddenly so very, very close.

This is the beauty of the stripped-down infrastructure of Kauai: There's one main road running the periphery of the island in a not-quite-complete loop. It dead-ends. on





both ends, around the northwest side, where jutting mountains get in the way. You can drive from one end to the other in two and a half hours and know Kauai within a few days.

Every trip to

Hawaii should start with a plunge into nature, and the best way here is to hike the cliff-hugging trail along (and up, and down) the Napali coast, an eleven-mile stretch of b-roll footage from The Reach Take the highway counterclockwise till you can't anymore. Park. Walk. If you can't do the whole stretch, tackle a shorter variation; a couple of them end at secluded lagoonesque beaches. Lounge. Swim. While you're on the north side, grab tacos from Pat's Taqueria, a salvation of a food truck parked near the pier in the town of Hanalei. Come back this way for dinner at Bar Acuda, a tapas place with a seafood bent that's easily the island's best restaurant and the rare finedining establishment where you can show up in shorts.

You're not in Kauai to tick a box on your restaurant bucket list, though. The island's south side has some of the fiftieth state's best surf breaks—beaches that slope at vertiginous angles into the water, with eight-foot waves rolling in all summer.



On the north side is Tunnels Beach, tucked behind a reef and crystal clear, as well as Secret Beach, the island's best, which requires you to leave your car parked on the street and to wander down a steep trail between two homes. In Kauai, directions like this are always worth it.

Kauai doesn't deal in hipster boutique hotels, so when it comes time to crash, you have a choice of the Grand Hyatt on the south side or the St. Regis on the north. They are resorts, with all the trappings of resorts. and while that word might make you wince, both are nice enough places to call home for a week. Especially if you'll be spending your days elsewhere.

For everything else, you'll catch on quickly. On day two, you'll ditch your GPS. A week in and you'll be doling out juice-bar advice. Stick around for ten days and you may take on that full twenty-two-mile hike. Or follow the lead of the mainland expats who came here for vacation, saw

the light, and stayed

Hanakapiai Falls: not even the only awesome waterfall on the island!

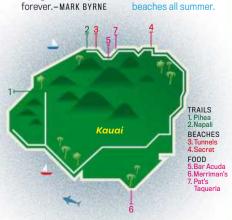
The trail along the Napali coast is spotted with idyllic beaches.

3 Her name is Jeni, and she's from San Diego.

The ahi poke at Merriman's Fish House, which recalls T.G.I. Friday's, except it's really good and almost entirely local.

On a tropical island, drink all the juice you can—just not the cold-pressed stuff.

The reefs lining the island's north side make for calm beaches all summer.









MITCHELL, 23

Abboud staple, are

to the big interview.

friendly.

student

JACKET

lapel soft jacket with patch pockets \$495

SHIRT

Gray check sports shirt \$150

PANTS

100% wool modern-fit flatfront dress pants \$195

> TIE Dotted tie \$95





JACOB, 32

actor

As Mr. Abboud can attest, the one item every man should have in his wardrobe is a perfectly tailored suit. We nailed it here with a timeless two-button silhouette in gray wool flannel.

- A crisp white shirt keeps the look sharp and minimal while the wool plaid tie subtly brings out the texture of the suit.
- A pocket square and briefcase are the details that set him apart.
- Monkstrap shoes have been a top pick at GO for several seasons now. Time to get on board.

SUIT

Two-button notch lapel slim-fit suit with ticket pocket. \$795

SHIRT Solid white dress shirt \$125

TIE Plaid tie \$95

JOSEPH ABBOUD

CHRIS, 40

trainer

Add a layer of sophistication and extra warmth by pairing a soft turtleneck under a heavier wool blazer. A favorite look of Hollywood legends, think Connery or McQueen, it's functional, rugged, and made for the modern traveler.

- → Can you tell we love the color gray this fall? It just goes with anything.
- Functionality has always been a key design element for Mr. Abboud, so with a simple flip of the collar, this jacket goes from sharp blazer to durable outerwear piece.
- A pair of heavy-soled motorcycle boots anchor the look and make navigating cold city streets a breeze.



Visit the flagship store in New York City or josephabboud.com for more fall essentials from the collection.

JOSEPH ABBOUD



JACKET

Herringbone peak lapel soft jacket with zippered ticket pocket \$495

SWEATER

Solid gray turtleneck sweater \$395

PANTS Solid five-pocket

\$195

GLOVES Black gloves \$95

@GQREPORT

f

EVENTS → PROMOTIONS → EXCLUSIVES



HAMILTON SHIRTS

Since 1883—the same year the Brooklyn Bridge opened—the **Hamilton** family has been crafting handmade shirts in the unlikely locale of Houston, Texas. Their pursuit of innovation, while respecting the art of timeless dressing, is what sets them apart. To find the perfect shirt, flawlessly crafted and fully customizable, visit their web site.

hamiltonshirts.com



EXPLORE YOUR SENSES WITH ISSEY MIYAKE

Issey Miyake and GQ invite you to an interactive experience that tells the stories of two GQ Xpeditionists, Renan Ozturk and Julian Bialowas, traveling on epic journeys inspired by the unique characteristics of L'Eau d'Issey Pour Homme and Nuit d'Issey. Follow their adventures through Alaska and Iceland.

report.gq.com/isseymiyake



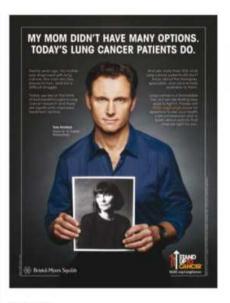
THE BEST NEW MENSWEAR DESIGNERS IN AMERICA

DESIGNER SPOTLIGHT | STAMPD

GQ and Gap have teamed up to celebrate four of the most brilliant new menswear makers in the country. Each one will design an affordable line with GQ's guidance, coming to Gap stores this fall. Rounding out 2015 is Chris Stamp of Stampd, whose Los Angeles—based label brings you elevated streetwear with elements from New York, Paris, and the beach, all in one.

Be sure to pick up the 2015 Best New Menswear Designers in America Collection in Gap stores nationwide when it launches this September.

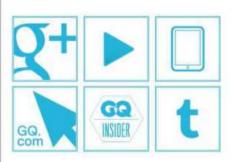
#GQforGap



SU₂C

Stand Up To Cancer (SU2C), a program of the Entertainment Industry Foundation, is increasing national awareness about lung cancer in a new PSA supported by a charitable donation from Bristol-Myers Squibb. The campaign features actor, director, and SU2C ambassador Tony Goldwyn, who lost his mother, Jennifer Coleman, to lung cancer.

standup2cancer.org/lungcancer



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David Chang's Kitchen



Tailgating?
Do I have to?

I know, I know—we're all supposed to pretend to love a party in the parking lot. But I've been to dozens of tailgates—from Phish concerts to the Iron Bowl—and while I enjoyed at least four or five of them, these days I'd much rather "tailgate" at home. If you're being honest, so would you

would you. Why? Well, you have your own bathroom-don't underestimate the wonders of a nonportable toilet. Then there's the view. Nowadays you can buy a TV that rivals your local art-house movie theater for not much more than four nosebleed seats at an NFL game. And finally there's the food. Some people (mainly southerners) are gifted tailgatersmulti-smoker barbecue rigs, RVs the size of mansionsbut most tailgates are sad affairs: overcooked burgers, undercooked chicken, and seven-layer

dip stewing in the sun. But I'm also a realist. It's nearly football season, and sooner or later you won't be merely invited to a tailgate—you'll be tasked with contributing to the spread. Which means there is only one path forward. It's the dark art of sandbagging, and it's what they

teach young culinary students not to do: precook all your food so you can just show up, unwrap your serving dishes, and soak up the compliments.

Whether you're at the stadium or in your own kitchen, sandbagging is the essential secret for hosting. There's no meal that can't be sandbagged, to one degree or another. And the more complicated (and impressive) the dish, the more important it is to sandbag it.

Which brings me to pozole, the sandbagger's ultimate weapon. Fat chunks of pork shoulder or beef bobbing around with dense, chewy hominy in a stew rendered crimson with chiles. On top, a barrage of condiments: raw onions, pickled chiles, fried tortillas, herbs, radishes, jalapeños, <u>Mexican</u> hot sauce, a squeeze of lime.

So the next time you get roped into a tailgate, bring a big pot of pozole, heat it up over the nearest grill, and surround it with six or seven

other sandbagged accoutrements. You'll trick people into thinking you worked your ass off, and the next morning, the leftovers will take care of your hangover. That's the other beautiful thing about sandbagging. It frees you up to focus on the real point of tailgating: getting drunk. Go ahead, get blinded. Because once you're inside, vour seats will be so far from the field, you won't be able to see shit anyway.

COOK IT!

GET DAVID CHANG'S POZOLE RECIPE

GQ • COM

Win the Lombardi Trophy of Tailgating

Ah, the tailgate. In theory, a beloved rite of autumn. In practice, an excuse for some self-proclaimed "grill master" to char burgers into hockey pucks while drinking himself stupid. Just in time for kickoff, Chef Chang offers a much tastier way to get ready for some football



PHOTOGRAPH BY ROMULO YANES



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P. 128 Disturbing, Dark-Souled French-Canadian

P. 130 Disturbing Australian P. 134 Disturbingly Intense College-Football Coach

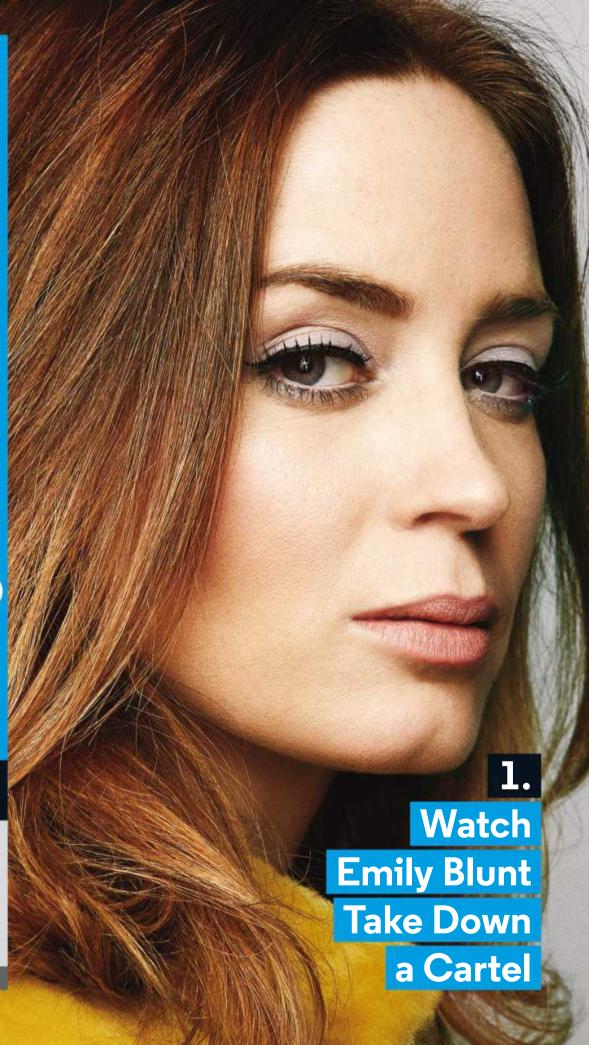
P. 136 Johnny Depp, Never Not Disturbing

P. 138 Our Great, Disturbed American Author

P. 140 Disturbing, Wedgie-Inducing High-Waist Pants

09/15

GQ.COM 127





IN SICARIO, Emily Blunt plays an overwhelmed FBI agent led into the dark, blood-soaked corners of the Mexican drug trade, guided by a sandal-wearing Josh Brolin and a brooding, highly lethal Benicio Del Toro. Directed by Denis Villeneuve, whose Prisoners and Enemy are two of the scarier, weirder, and brooding-ier films of the past couple of years, Sicario may not be the most profound movie on the subject of the war on drugs. But it is definitely profound on the subject of people doing violent, horrible, atmospherically menacing things to one

atmospherically menacing things to one another in places like Juárez. ZACH BARON called Blunt in London to talk about the film, and the insomnia it gave her.

The prequel to 2012's Snow White & the Huntsman, this time starring Chris Hemsworth and Jessica Chastain.

GQ: What are you doing in London right now? Emily Blunt: I'm playing an evil queen in The Huntsman. I just come in and out and cast spells and generally harm people. It's been great.

Is that a new experience for you, being evil?

I don't think I have played evil before, which is why it's been so rewarding. I'm surprised how much I enjoy it.

Is that a weird moment, realizing, "Oh, actually, the villain is easier to access than the heroine"? [laughs] It is a strange moment, yes. A time for self-reflection, maybe.

Did you discover anything interesting in that moment of self-reflection?

I'm still trying to figure out why I enjoy it as much as I do. I'm someone's mother now. I should be more concerned.

Last year you took a bunch of time off after you had your daughter. What was it about *Sicario* — that made you want to leave the house?

I read it and I thought, "I can't do this film. This is so dark. I've just become a mother, and this is not what I want to do." And Denis Villeneuve came to our house, and my daughter was 4 weeks old, and I was

Worth it for the Mexico-set, super-gripping, apocalyptically bloody freeway shoot-out alone. Blunt's amazing—tense, tentative, in way over her head. It may not make a ton of sense, but it is as absorbing and trilling as movies get right now.

Maybe the strangest, most intense director currently getting big(-ish) budgets and turning them into big(-ish) box-office success. Are his movies about anything? Who knows? But they're marvels of mood, tension, and fear.

That would be John Krasinski, of Office fame. Their first date was at a gun range. just sitting there, like, in my pajamas, with no makeup on, just breast-feeding, and he was pitching me this movie! And I just said, "Denis, you're sure you want me to do it? Like, are you sure?" And he went, [in a French accent] "Non, madame, I feel you're going to be great!" He's like a quiet assassin. He lures you in with this smile and this lovely humor, and suddenly you're in fucking Mexico, speeding down the street.

Denis seems like a very charming man who makes some very fucked-up movies.

He is the sweetest man, with the darkest soul. He has a very interesting relationship with violence. I think he's able to find beauty in the darkest of places.

You've said you couldn't sleep for four days after you shot a particular scene in the film. I'm curious which scene it was.

It was the massive fight scene with Jon Bernthal. He's a boxer, so he was like, "Just smack me. I'm fine. I'm not even gonna feel it." I mean, we kicked the shit out of each other. I think it was just that feeling of being overpowered by a guy. I'd never experienced that before. But I really like that you don't have this sort of cheesy action sequence where I'm kicking someone's ass who could blatantly overpower me any day of the week. So that scene was quite jarring. Every time I went to bed, I couldn't sleep.

What's Denis's vibe when you're shooting these dark scenes?

He has this sort of shtick where he shows up and he goes, *[in a French accent]* "I don't know, I'm so fucked-up today, I have not had enough coffee, I don't know what to do with this thing, madame, what do you think?" He sort of leads you into thinking that you are desperately needed, that the world would fall apart without you. And really, he knows exactly what he wants to do.

He has said he faced pressure to rewrite your character as a male role.

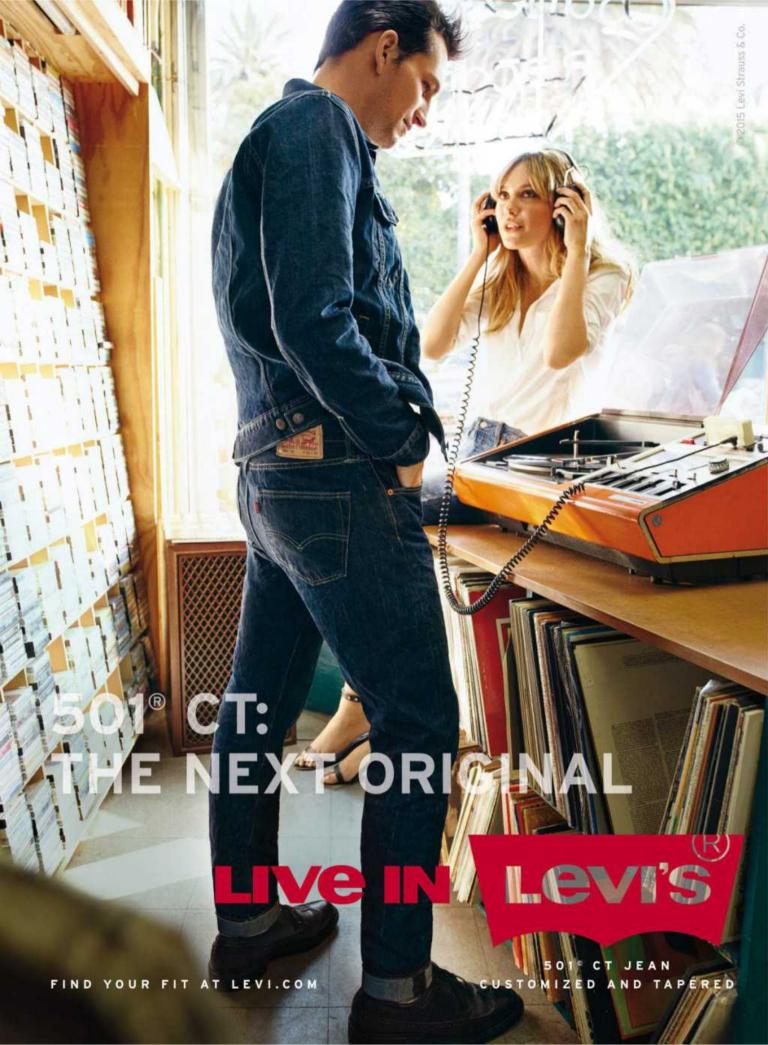
Yeah, it's just silly. And thank God he had the conviction to fight against something like that, because women have proven themselves time and time again to be worthy of box office and worthy of interesting three-dimensional characters and stories. People crunch numbers on everything these days, and I think they crunch numbers on an actor-driven film versus an actress-driven film. So he was told, "If you do it with a guy, you'll get more money for your film."

Does someone look you in the eye and actually say that, or do you only hear it secondhand?

I've heard it from producers. And my husband produces and has directed two films, so he hears all of this. You get sent a list of the five guys who will bring you certain amounts.

Your husband is very tall and very large, but you're the action-movie hero in the family. That must be fun.

You should see him right now. He's playing a former Navy Seal for Michael Bay. I might be dethroned.





Still, ten years ago, when you were shooting *The Devil Wears Prada*, did you picture yourself ending up as a super-badass action hero?

It is a slightly strange thing. But this part in *Sicario* was very different in many ways from the part in *Edge of Tomorrow*, because that was an all-out action heroine sort of role, and this is a quiet, shy, restrained person. I think the mistake people make is that just because I'm carrying a gun and because I'm working in a male-driven world in this film, that doesn't necessarily make my character a really tough person.

Based on the novel All You Need Is Kill, the movie went into theaters called Edge of Tomorrow and then was released on DVD as Live Die Repeat. Why? Even Emily Blunt can't tell you why.

I get your point about the Sicario role being different from your role in Edge of Tomorrow, or whatever it's — called now—what is it called now? I don't know. [laughs] You tell me.

Has anyone smart ever told you why Edge of Tomorrow—which is a really good movie—wasn't an enormous box-office success?

Uh, yes. *[laughs]* And I have my own opinion on it as well. But I think it's too complicated and probably not something I should talk about. I'll probably get in trouble. But I do feel that people got the wrong end of the stick when they saw the trailer for that film. That much I'll say.

It was *The Adjustment Bureau*, which is a mediocre movie, but Blunt and Matt Damon's banter-y chemistry is nuclear.

But do you feel like you're particularly good at these action-movie roles? Or are you just the rare actress who gets chances to do that stuff?

I think that it's mainly the latter. Nobody thought that I'd be good in *Edge of Tomorrow*, and Tom Cruise was the one who saw me in something and said, "Her. She'd be great." But predominantly it's about being given the opportunity. You're only as good as the parts you're given.

My sense is, you've turned down more passive roles in action films.

If I'm gonna do an action film, I want to see some action. If I'm, like, tied to a tree somewhere, saying, "Help me!"—that's never been of interest.

ANNALS OF "THAT GUY" ACTORS

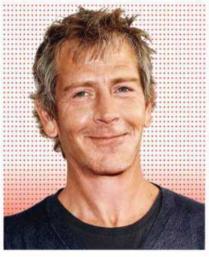
2 Get Chills (Again) from Ben Mendelsohn

→ We mean this in the best way: Ben Mendelsohn is a creep. (Now he's a creep with an Emmy nomination, for Netflix's Bloodline.) He's part of a long and proud tradition of actors specializing in weirdos, jerks, and flat-out villains that are somehow both sleazy and seductive. In this month's Mississippi Grind, alongside Ryan Reynolds, he's Gerry, whom Mendelsohn calls his favorite creep yet.

GQ: What was the first thing you did when you were nominated? Ben Mendelsohn:

I took a shot in a dingy little pub in Dungeness, which is—foreboding as it sounds—on the English coast.

Why are you so good in these roles? There's a certain shambolic looseness to the way I go about things that might push that along. It's also the post-Animal Kingdom effect.



Is that frustrating? On the contrary.

On the contrary.

None of this stuff

Stateside would have
happened without

Animal Kingdom. I'm
incredibly thankful
for it. I take it as a great
compliment, in fact.

Difficult characters are
rewarding to play. To
be able to put facets in



Some of your characters are real assholes. How do you deal with that? I used to play a lot

of very sweet boys with wide eyes that were in love. And people once upon a time thought that's who I was. And they regarded it the same way as they do now with difficult guys—that that's what I did. That stuff changes with time and with whatever things you get afforded the opportunity to do.

5 of Ben's Best Creeps

→ Mendelsohnian: adj. Unsettling but also curiously appealing, as such:



Gangster Creep Animal Kingdom Melbourne mafioso goes on the lam.



Psycho
Creep
Black Sea
Loose cannon
gets cabin
fever and
stabs a man.



C-Suite
Creep
The Dark
Knight Rises
Corporate
mastermind
seeks a WMD.



Junkie Creep Killing Them Softly Serial dognapper commits illadvised heist.



Paternal Creep Starred Up Father-son reunion in prison ends poorly.

The Eerie All-Stars

→ Hollywood always has one around: a guy who's happy to play the hypnotic outcast. Mendelsohn is the latest to carry the baton. Here, some of our previous favorites.



John Hawkes
The cult leader we'd gladly sister-wife (and then be murdered by).



Harry Dean Stanton Been creepin' since 1957. (And at 89, he's still got it!)



Crispin Glover
How do you make
George McFly
creepy? Cast this guy.



Steve Buscemi His eyes are the stuff of memes.

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ON-THE-FIELD REPORTING

Watch Jim Harbaugh Attack College Football with an Enthusiasm Unknown to Mankind

"CAN EVERYBODY HEAR ME?!"
Jim Harbaugh booms,
welcoming 230 high school
quarterbacks to his super-cool
backyard, the Big House, the home
of Michigan football and, on any
given Saturday, 110,000 fans in
maize and blue. "I've got a good
coach's voice, so I don't think we'll
need a microphone!"

It's true. And everyone's been listening. Not just at this summer QB camp, but ever since his return to Ann Arbor after Christmas. The situation is very nearly unprecedented: a football coach with as much delirious success as Harbaugh—he turned around two NCAA programs (San Diego and Stanford) and then led the San Francisco 49ers to three straight NFC Championship games—heading back to college by choice.

Though to question Harbaugh's move is to misunderstand the institutional and personal forces at work. Jim's dad, Jack, was an assistant under the legendary Michigan coach Bo Schembechler; Jim was a ball boy, a regular fixture on the sideline and in the locker room, and ultimately a three-year starting quarterback for Bo and the Wolverines in the '80s. Jim was, then, a pre-programmed, deep-faith zealot—the only coach who might make that radical shift look like a step up. (The seven-year \$40 million contract helps, too.)

The Harbaugh signing—even in the depths of an all-time bleak streak (Michigan was 5-7 last year, zero Big Ten titles in a decade)—immediately inspired,

in the Michigan faithful, a sense that everything was going to be okay. "I swear there's been more unbridled irrational exuberance over Harbaugh's arrival," says John U. Bacon, author of *Endzone: The Rise, Fall, and Return of Michigan Football*, "than there was in 1997–98 over a national title."

When Harbaugh moved to Ann Arbor in blackest December, he got straight to brass tacks (posting up at the Residence Inn until he eventually picked a house on Bo's old block), focusing on the elements—the mental ones—on which he could impart maximal Harbaugh-ness. And as with so many problems he's met in life and football (one and the same, besides), a Harbaugh solution here would begin with an improvement of attitude.

"Life is so simple!" Jim's father, Jack, tells the camp kids, moving like a windup toy at initial release. "Jim mentioned today the ABC's"—Jim had described his foolproof system of teaching his six kids to ride a bicycle; the ABC's of bike riding could make a better quarterback, too, evidently. "Well, I have another one! ACE. A-C-E. Attitude. Competitiveness. Enthusiasm. When you ace a test... Fighter pilots, if he's the best, he's called...the ace. He's the best! If you shoot a hole in one in golf, that's called an...ace. Can't do any better than that!"

"The best pitcher on a baseball team!" someone shouts. Heads turn to see what kid has interrupted. Turns out it's Jim, on the edge of his seat in the third row.

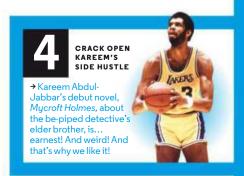
"Thank you, Jim! The ace right-hander, he's called the...ace of the pitching staff!"

"The highest card in a deck!" Jim shouts again.

"Ace!! There's another one!! It's almost as though we've done this before. So there's those three letters: Attitude Competitiveness Enthusiasm. A-C-E. And I don't know of anybody in my life that more epitomizes those three letters than Jim Harbaugh."

Jack tells a Jim story: During the August two-a-day's between Jim's sophomore and junior years at Michigan, Jim was searching for a competitive advantage. Between the morning and late-afternoon practices, players would shower off and take a five-hour break. Jim had always done this, too. But one day, he tried something new: What if instead of hitting the showers, he changed into running shorts and pounded a few miles on the streets of Ann Arbor? Anything for an edge.

This representative Jim Myth is just one drop in the deep bucket of Jim Myths that play well with recruits, young players, ***



for all mankind FORALLMANKIND.COM



· Clean slate, non-pleated khakis, might lose.

and especially fans. Behold the varied ways—calculated and inadvertent— Jim Harbaugh spent his winter, spring, and summer making supporters feel comforted by and giddy with his presence on the sideline. Here was a coach whose maniacal exuberance on Twitter (@CoachJim4UM: "Attacking this day with Enthusiasm Unknown to Mankind"), including endorsements of the Pope and Emerson and Judge Judy and Cracker Barrel, became its own sort of news.

A coach whose blog-baiting recruiting tactics (he worked an offer into a kid's prom ask), popularity among undergrads (he finished fourth as a write-in candidate for student-body president), provocations with other coaches (he ran a series of "satellite" football camps in enemy territory), dadbod-flaunting (he was photographed on the skins squad of a pickup game), and even highway heroics (he aided a woman who'd crashed on I-94) established him as not merely the sculptor of a turnaround but its mascot, too.

Soon, this version of Jim Harbaughpost-election, pre-inauguration, pure hope—will be knotted off like a balloon and cast into the collective past, and the business of winning will supersede everything else. (As will the business of losing-the truer test of Harbaugh's depthless enthusiasm.) But at the camp, he's still in mascot mode, his big and balanced body in block-M ball cap (Bo's hat) and khakis (extra-wide), sheering through space, practicing his footwork and wrist snap like an 18-year-old redshirt reserve, glad-handing parents like an upstart politician, his lip slung with dip stretching a wide smile wider.

"You can tell I'm pretty darn excited to be out here today. I was in this camp when I was in the seventh grade!"

For Harbaugh, football is a greater gift to mankind than fire. Which is why he says it, his battle cry, over and over all day at camp, just as he will all season, win or lose: "Who's got it better than us?!"

And the players all respond resoundingly with what they've been convinced of by Coach: "NOBODY!"

—DANIEL RILEY

WHAT THE WIG?!

See Johnny Depp(Once Again) Made Ugly

No beautiful leading man has tried harder to bury his beauty than Johnny Depp. But he's never looked less pretty-boy than as mobster Whitey Bulger in *Black Mass*. Here, Depp's most memorable un-pretty looks.—LAUREN LARSON

1. Edward Scissorhands Understudy to the Cure's Robert Smith. 2. Alice in
Wonderland
Carrot Top +
dandy
zombie = this

3. Dark Shadows To be fair, GQ has probably endorsed this side-swept cut.

4. Black Mass Just had to bust out an old H. S. Thompson outfit. 5. Charlie and the Chocolate Factory Does he hide his 6. The Lone Ranger Racist.



SONIC PRODUCERS (AIN'T NO LOSERS)

6-10 This Month's Album to [] To



[Work Out] Caracal

Disclosure

GQ: How is this album different from your debut? Guy Lawrence (left, who makes up the duo with his brother, Howard): "In dance music, if you change tempo, you change genres. At ninety to ninety-five beats per minute, you're making hip-hop. If you start at 180 bpm, you're making drum-and-bass. It's weird how the genre is defined by the speed. Instead of just basing our sound around house music with that tempo of 120 to 130 bpm, we're spreading ourselves across a variety of tempos and therefore crossing genres."



[Drive] Yours, Dreamily, The Arcs

Dan Auerbach of the Black Keys gets his soul-filled, prog-v psych on.



[Brood] Poison Season Destroyer

As idiosyncratic and literary as always, this time with a bigger budget.



[Nap] Depression Cherry

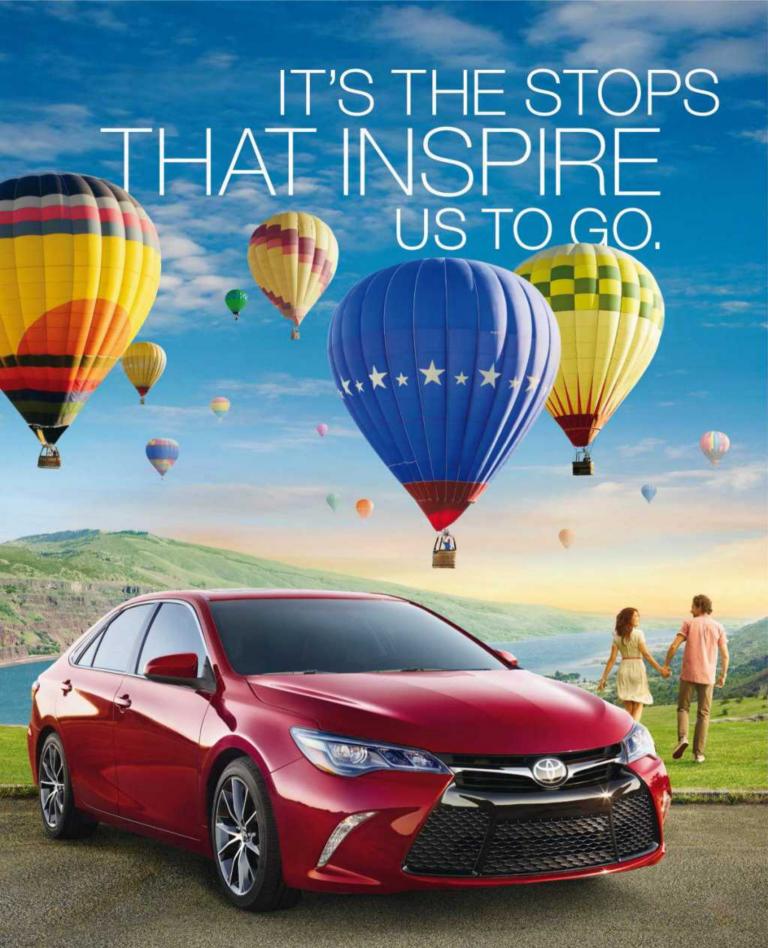
Beach House Dream-pop's

torchbearers sound like the radio on codeine.



[Blaze] Invite the Light Dam-Funk

Another ninetyminute synthy funkfest from the R&B outsider.



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CLIFFS NOTES

Find Out If Franzen Is Still King of the Highbrow Hill

• Purity Tyler is trying to escape her mother's grip and locate a man stuck fighting a battle in



IF YOU HAPPEN TO BE publishing a novel this month, my condolences.

The first time I met Jonathan Franzen, in 1998, he was an acclaimed but not-yet-famous writer hard at work on a book still fitfully emerging. Three years later, The Corrections sold enough copies to dam the Grand Canyon and made its author one of the most arguedover literary figures on the planet. Watching a

friend become a phenomenon is a peculiar thing, akin to having a walk-on role in someone else's out-of-body experience.

A career-making novel like The Corrections is typically followed by a littler novel, or by no novel at all. Here Franzen defied expectation, first with Freedom (2010), a fat, brilliant novel of politics, marriage, and environmentalism, and now with Purity, a fat, brilliant novel of politics, marriage, and the Internet.

The Purity of Purity is Purity "Pip" Tyler, a young woman living in an anarchists' squat in Oakland and saddled with massive student-loan debt. Pip is a self-described "mess" who doesn't trust people; her one shining ambition is "not to end up like her mother," a human train wreck on the run from some presumably traumatic past. Pip comes to the attention of Andreas Wolf, "a daring and sensational critic of the Communist regime" in 1980s East Germany, who parlayed his parochial notoriety into modernday fame with the Sunlight Project, a kind of left-wing Drudge Report focused on "social injustice and toxic secrets worldwide." Wolf lives in mortal fear that a crime he committed as a young man will be exposed. Someone intimately connected to Pip was party to this crime, and Pip, unwittingly weaponized, becomes a pawn in a decades-old battle between two former friends on either side of a journalistic and ethical divide.

Since The Corrections, Franzen has largely eschewed writing neat, demarcated scenes; in their place are rolling narrative summaries, within which scenes briefly appear and dissolve like drops of water on hot asphalt. Yet Franzen remains an extremely fine noticer, describing the "vaguely cocoa smell of fresh-turned earth" and likening one character's curves to the shapes "wind carves in snowdrifts." Seemingly unconnected narrative warheads begin to gradually, and then thrillingly, converge. Soon you are less turning pages than flipping toward the mushroom cloud.

Despite his much remarked crankiness about technology and the destruction of the natural world, Franzen himself is no crank. Systems, and their infernal methods of oppression, are the great preoccupation of the full-time crank; the one thing the full-time crank is emphatically not interested in is actual people. Franzen's earlier, more cerebral novels heavily concern systems-civic, informational, scientific—as well as the characters who navigate them with varying degrees of complicity and resistance. But Purity, like all of Franzen's later, more warm-blooded novels, is primarily about people—frustrating, self-contradictory people.

That fascination, coupled with his narrative skill, helps explain why his books so cunningly walk the line between commercial success and high-lit achievement. Franzen often telegraphs and outright spoils his big dramatic twists, as though to suggest to readers that the pleasure of narrative shockeroos is beneath them. He is not wrong. A common assumption of commercial fiction holds that what truly matters is the *what* or the *who*. But great fiction is never about the what or the who. It's about the how. If the how of this book sometimes strains credulity—a cruel decision Wolf makes late in the novel will be a flashpoint of criticism—it is never uninteresting.

Some years after he became Jonathan Franzen, American Writer. I brought up something Norman Mailer had once said about how "celebrity took away much of the necessary anonymity" he needed to complete the "large, collective novels about American life" he aspired to write. Franzen assured me this was mostly bullshit, but I can't say I believed him entirely. It's been at least a decade since I asked him about fame and doubted his answer. Here is yet more proof that I was wrong, and he was right.-TOM BISSELL



THE BEST

NEW MENSWEAR

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IN AMERICA

2015

We asked our roster of Best New Menswear Designers what inspired their 2015 GQ x Gap collections and what we can expect. Here's what they had to say.

NSF

What inspires your brand? We are inspired by the everyday—what we wear, what we do, and what we find.

Any surprising inspiration behind this collection? Actually, some of the signature paint washes we developed come from pieces we wear while working on our own home.



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LOOK FOR THE NEW COLLECTIONS THIS SEPTEMBER.

the Hill-side

Describe your brand mantra. We want to make wearable clothes and accessories that use the best materials available and that express the beauty of those materials.

What are we going to find in this collection? We synthesized some of our older inspirations with what we are digging now—so there's a bit of workwear, a bit of prep, and a bit of military all mixed together.



H Wh

DAVID

What role does color play in your inspiration? I wanted colors that could work for both East and West Coast dressing. This color palette is roated in mid-century modernism with dusty browns and pops of teal, pink, and light blue, which helped us keep it super mensweary but with an updated twist.

What are guys going to get out of these pieces? My collections have always been about separates, so I wanted to create pieces that can be mixed and matched.



What inspired you with this collection?

Black sand beaches, along with a desaturated color palette.

What have you learned from this experience? We've learned a lot, and moving forward we will use the hard work of all the teams involved as an example of how quickly we can get things done.



FIND IT IN STORES AND ON GAP.COM

Let Leon Bridges Save Your Soul

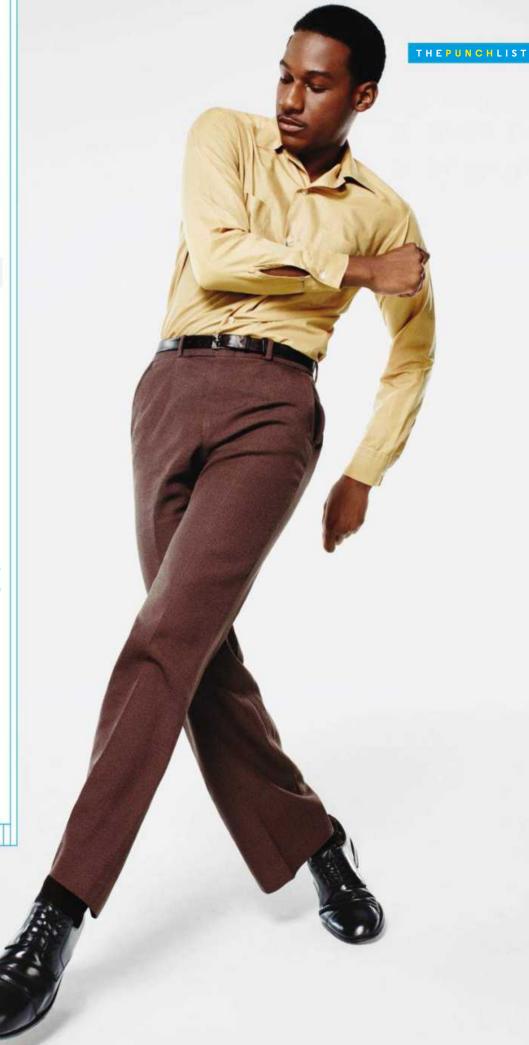
• Maybe it's the lovelorn lyrics about a man who misses his girl and loves his momma. Or the speaker-rattling reverb. Or, above all else, that voice: effortlessly crisp, honey sweet, tap-dancing across a set of impeccably strung vocal cords. But at a time when every other musician breaking onto the scene spits bars or drops beats, we can't help but assume that 26-year-old Fort Worth native Leon Bridges arrived in a time machine from a 1957 episode of American Bandstand.

His genre-appropriate style—high-waist pants, collared shirts, freshly shined shoes—only furthers the time-warp effect. Back home, he's a bit of a mystery, too. "To see a young black man, especially in Texas, with his pants all the way up to his nipples and shirt tucked in...it's weird in certain circles," Bridges says proudly, defiantly. "Round town, we call it 'getting GQ.' The ladies love it!"

They also love his tunes, along with droves of people like us who didn't realize we missed such simple R&B. Bridges's debut, Coming Home, dropped in June, and his first major U.S. tour begins in October. As of this writing, more than half the shows are sold out, proving that soul's not dead, it was just waiting for the right voice.

—ERIC SULLIVAN

🔼 JASON KIM





SEANJOHN



Dream BigJussie Smollett Artist/Activist Empire on FOX





3 Am

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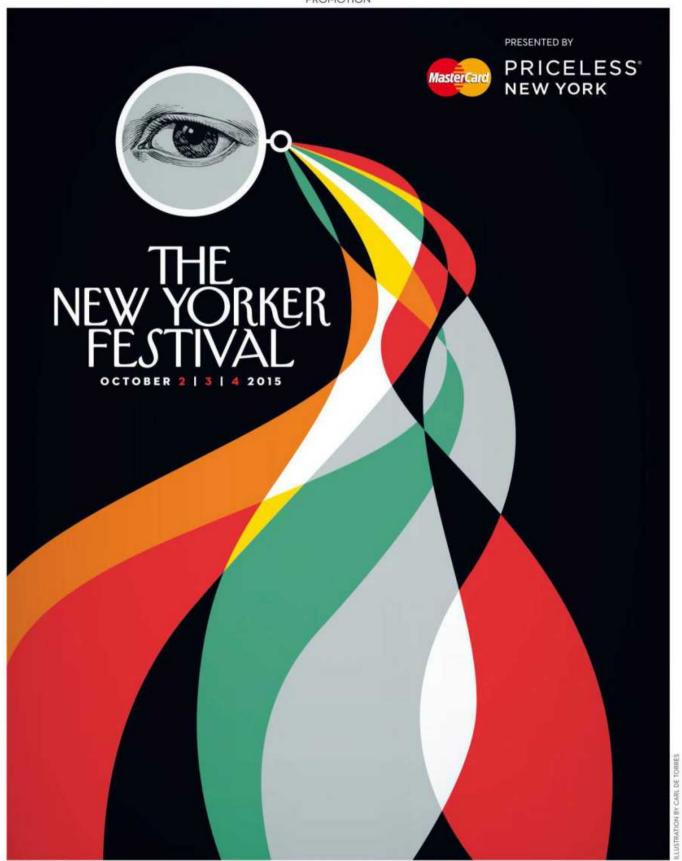
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• When asked whether he's to the right or left of Clinton, O'Malley likes to say he's "to the forward."

ago, O'Malley, the former governor of Maryland and a perpetually rising star in Democratic politics, seemed like the no-brainer alternative to Hillary Clinton. "The best manager working in government today," the *Washington Monthly* called him, a problem solver who had slashed crime as mayor of Baltimore. But now those rosy urban achievements had taken on the stink of controversy, complicating his pitch for the presidency.

A young woman in a peasant skirt raised her hand. "As mayor of Baltimore, you oversaw an era of mass arrests of nonviolent offenders," she told the candidate, citing statistics—"110,000 arrests were made in one year in a city of 620,000 people"—before getting to her question. "What are we supposed to expect from you on the issue of mass incarceration and institutional racism?"

As he listened, O'Malley's smile grew forced and his jaw began to bulge. He has a temper. Plus, he doesn't like to be called out. As mayor, O'Malley once paid a visit to a couple of radio hosts criticizing him for being insufficiently concerned about crime. "Come outside after the show," he scolded them, "and I'll kick your ass."

Now, in Iowa City, O'Malley seemed on the verge of unloading again. He'd been on edge since April, when riots erupted in Baltimore after cops were implicated in the killing of an unarmed black man named Freddie Gray. Years of mistrust between the city's police and its black citizens were glaringly exposed—and suddenly the two terms O'Malley spent as the city's mayor from 1999 to 2007 were subject to brutal re-examination. O'Malley—who had always taken plenty of credit for slowing crime by employing tough "zero tolerance" policing techniques—found himself being blamed for the city's racial acrimony.

David Simon, the former *Baltimore Sun* reporter and creator of *The Wire*, declaimed that "the stake through the heart of police procedure in Baltimore was Martin O'Malley." On *Meet the Press*, Chuck Todd incredulously asked O'Malley, "Do you think you can still run on your record as mayor of Baltimore, governor of Maryland, given all this?" And when O'Malley launched his presidential campaign, protesters crashed

the festivities, chanting "Black Lives Matter" and burnishing NOMALLEY signs. In the wake of police violence in Ferguson, Cleveland, New York, and now Baltimore, the old-school goodgovernance dictates about getting tough on crime seemed out of touch. Suddenly Democrats were scrambling to take up the mantle of police reform, and O'Malley was stranded on the wrong side of one of the defining issues for liberals today.

"You weren't in Baltimore in 1999, but I was," he told the young woman, with more than a hint of contempt in his voice. "It looked more like Mexico City than an American city, and the gutters quite literally ran with blood." There was no applause. These people didn't get it, he seemed to be thinking. What he'd done in Baltimore was worthy of their respect and not, as the woman in the peasant skirt suggested, part of "the long history of brutalization" of "communities of color." He was the guy, he wanted to tell them, who could save those communities—the guy who knows that you don't stop criminals by asking politely and that turning around a city isn't as easy as replacing openair drug markets with shabby-chic condos. But that kind of talk had fallen out of fashion. The political hand O'Malley had been planning to play was now a loser. The man who wanted to be president swallowed hard and tried to pivot to something else.

A WEEK LATER, O'Malley was back in Baltimore, where he lives in a French Provincial house that he bought earlier this year for \$550,000. It's a nice but modest place. When he was term-limited out of his job as governor in January, O'Malley didn't join a law firm or look to cash in. Instead, he took a part-time teaching gig at Johns Hopkins and got to work running for president. With his carefully parted gray hair and unwavering eye contact, it's hard to imagine the guy as anything other than a politician. It's hard for him to imagine it, too. O'Malley won his first election at 28 and for twenty-four years never left public office until this past January.

"He has no drive to make a lot of money," O'Malley's wife, Katie, who herself is a district-court judge, told me as we sat on the porch. "And that's okay."

"I have never heard her say that last part," O'Malley interjected.

On one level, then, O'Malley's presidential run makes sense as the next step in a political career. But it's been horribly timed—and not just because of what's happened in Baltimore. After all, to run for president as a Democrat in 2016—and not be named Clinton—makes no sense at all. Which is why O'Malley's run has been

"I do have a new perspective to offer," O'Malley says, "and it is generational, and there is a big generational shift under way within our country."



greeted with suspicion of ulterior motives. Some assume he's laying the groundwork for a future presidential campaign. Others believe he's shooting to be Hillary's veep or to land a plum cabinet assignment. "I've heard it all before." O'Mallev says. dismissing the talk of the vice presidency and cabinet posts—as well as chatter that he's helping Hillary knock off some rust before she faces her eventual Republican opponent. "I'm not running to be a sparring partner." He touts a record of getting things done that he says surpasses Clinton's achievements. Not that he's trying to draw attention to the fact that he's battling Clinton. "I'm not running against anybody," he says.

Indeed, his campaign is so remarkably passive-aggressive that he's reticent to even say the name Clinton, referring to her instead as "this year's inevitable front-runner." For now, he prefers to draw contrasts with her by issuing slightly more liberal—and extraordinarily more detailed—policy papers on things like financial regulation and immigration.

But even if O'Malley takes off the gloves, it's hard to imagine how he'll hurt Clinton. "Sometimes people have asked me, 'Are you to the left or to the right of her?' and I respond, 'I am to the forward of her," O'Malley says. "I arrived at these things before she did because I am of a different generation than she is." He adds, "I do have a new perspective to offer, and it is generational, and there is a big generational shift under way within our country. The attitudes of people under 40 are very different than those of people over 50." That last bit may be true—and it may also be a badly veiled jab at the 67-year-

"WATCH OUT for the dog shit," O'Malley said, helping me to avoid an urban hazard near his campaign headquarters in Baltimore.

old Clinton-but does it make the case for

O'Malley? After all, O'Malley is 52.

"You can't do anything about that?" I joked.

"If I were mayor, by God," he replied.

In many ways, it seemed like he still was. "That's new, we just rehabbed that," he said, pointing to a movie theater with an impressive marquee. A storefront sign boasting over thirty types of tea was a testament to his wisdom in long ago declaring the neighborhood an "arts district."

It was law school that brought O'Malley to Baltimore after he'd grown up in the Maryland suburbs of Washington, D.C. He fell in love with both the city and a local girl, Katie Curran, whom he'd marry. In 1990, O'Malley was 27 and working as a prosecutor when he launched a quixotic bid for the state senate against an opponent who had the backing of the Baltimore political establishment. O'Malley's narrow defeat, by just forty-four votes, served notice to the city's political power brokers that he was a comer, and the next year, with a good deal of their support, he was elected to the city council. He quickly began mixing it up with his colleagues. When fellow councilman Bobby Curran (who happens to be Katie's uncle) got behind a housing commissioner that O'Malley opposed, he wrote a scathing



letter accusing Curran of frequenting "the brothel of unprincipled and corrupt men." "I've never gotten a letter like that from a colleague," Curran told me, "much less from a family member!"

In 1999, after eight years on the city council, O'Malley ran for mayor. It was a gamble even more audacious than his bid for the state senate. Baltimore is a majority-black city, a place where conventional wisdom held that a white politician didn't have a prayer of winning citywide office. Baltimore was also a mess, with the highest violent-crime rate of any American city and a population shrinking by 1,000 people a month. O'Malley made a convincing promise to restore order. When he won the Democratic primary (and, by extension, the general election), the Washington Post headline said it all: WHITE MAN GETS MAYORAL NOMINATION IN BALTIMORE.

O'Malley governed as a wonky innovator, instituting a program called CitiStat to track city services. He tapped the legendary New York City detective Jack Maple, who created the strategies that many credited with leading to that city's dramatic drop in crime, to work his magic in Baltimore. And in the decade after O'Malley became mayor, Baltimore's crime rate fell by 48 percent, a success that he considered instrumental for real racial progress.

His accomplishments were even more impressive considering O'Malley's youth and inexperience. "Mike Bloomberg was well into his fifties and was a world-

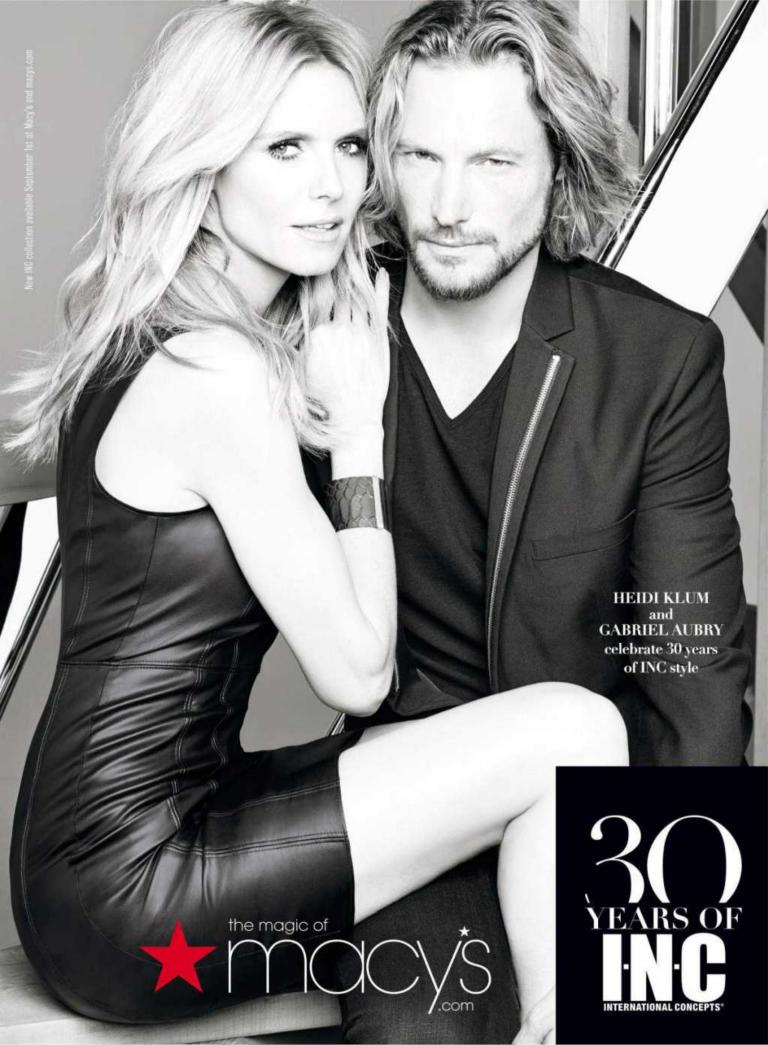
renowned businessman when he did what he did in New York," says the urban-studies guru and best-selling author Richard Florida. "Martin did this in his thirties. He's really one of the great urban mayors of our time."

His tactics earned him critics, too—most prominently David Simon. He charges that the reduction in crime O'Malley cites was really a result of fudging the numbers—and that his get-tough policing policies actually made things worse. "Marty left a mess between the community and police department," Simon told me, "and destroyed the ability of the police department to do good work."

The O'Malley camp is quick to dismiss Simon. "Simon likes to cast himself as an urban sage," says a longtime O'Malley adviser, "but he's a Hollywood writer." However, among liberals (and political reporters), Simon is more than a mere showrunner, and his critique has set the tone for much of the coverage of O'Malley's campaign—as well as revived old animosities.

Back when O'Malley was on the city council and Simon was working at *The Baltimore* Sun, the two were on the same side of things: both fierce critics of the police department. But after O'Malley was elected mayor, Simon trained his fire on him—a turnabout that O'Malley's people chalk up to a petty dispute over a journalistic project. Simon had asked to embed with the new mayor for a book he wanted to write, but O'Malley said no. So instead, Simon turned his attentions to television, eventually creating The Wire, which included the character of Tommy Carcetti, an ambitious city councilman who ascends to mayor and then governor. He was widely perceived to be a stand-in for O'Malley.

That Carcetti was callow and dishonest isn't what rankled O'Malley. Rather, it was the fact that Carcetti cheated on his wife, a story line written into the show right around







• O'Malley's bar band—and his penchant for rocking sleeveless tees—worried his aides.

the time a well-coordinated whisper campaign of marital faithlessness was being directed against O'Malley by his opponents. "I stopped watching when they got the Carcetti character," Katie O'Malley told me. "It was trying to fuel this rumor of infidelity. There was one scene where he says good-bye to his wife and small kids, and the next scene he's in a hotel room with a woman. And I was like, 'All right, this is bullshit.'"

O'Malley's image in this regard wasn't helped by the fact that he was still playing in his bar band, O'Malley's March-frequently in a sleeveless shirt that his aides worried detracted from his gravitas. Some in O'Malley's circle believed that the infidelity allegations-which were never close to being substantiated-gained traction only because of the music. "I told him, 'You need to be home with your family," one former adviser says, "'not in a bar in a muscle shirt with 3,000 screaming 20-year-old girls." (Another former aide notes the improbability of those rumors, given the Irish folk rock that O'Malley favored. "My guess is he was really not getting laid off that.")

Simon told me Carcetti's cheating had nothing to do with O'Malley and that he bears no ill will over the scotched book project: "I don't care if the guy was fucking Jesus Christ or my brother, Gary. If he were standing up in public and arguing for these things I'm unalterably against, I'd stand up and say so."

Still, for all the trouble his résumé in Baltimore now may give him with critics like Simon, the O'Malley campaign says it can glimpse a silver lining there, too. "I wouldn't go so far as to call it an opportunity," says Steve Kearney, a longtime O'Malley adviser, "but if there continues to be a discussion of poverty and race in America, we've got a guy from Vermont and

a woman who's been in a bubble the last twenty years. And then there's O'Malley, who was mayor of one of our toughest cities." Which, in the current political climate, may be akin to a Clinton adviser claiming that she'll have an advantage if the campaign turns into a discussion of e-mail security.

IN HIS KITCHEN, the candidate leaned over his coffeemaker and braced himself for the long day ahead. He was due soon at the headquarters of the National Education Association to lobby the teachers' union for its endorsement. He was under no illusions—and didn't even try, for a reporter's benefit, to pretend—that he could beat out Clinton for it. "We call it the NEA nonendorsement meeting," O'Malley said. "The only question now is whether they endorse her or don't endorse for a while." He took a slug of coffee from his *Face the Nation* mug. "But you sit and you pretend and you go through the process anyway."

As O'Malley gave me a tour of his new digs, he seemed to be seeing the place for the first time. "I don't know who put all those pictures there," he said as he examined a

shelf in his study. Eventually he came across a small tchotchke, a woodblock that he cradled in his hands. His mind drifted back.

In 1988, before Gary Hart's presidential hopes were undone by the Donna Rice scandal, O'Malley had worked hard for the campaign. The woodblock had been a gift from Hart, a memento from the end. "This is one of five of these he gave to the last of us," O'Malley said, recalling the fateful day. "He said he just wanted to see us for lunch. We went to a place called Strings, I think, which was a pasta place in Denver. He just started talking. About ten minutes into it, without any transition, Hart says, 'I'm getting out of the race tomorrow.' And he pulls out this bag, and he hands them all around to us."

Whether, in his heart of hearts, Martin O'Malley holds that keepsake and envisions the day that he'll gather the last of his own staff for a similar chat, he doesn't say. For now, he's going to be the president. "We're going to win," he told me. He can't afford to think anything else.

 ${\tt JASON\ ZENGERLE}\ is\ {\tt GQ's\ political}\ correspondent.$



Remember Tommy Carcetti? The young city councilman who shocks the city of Baltimore by becoming mayor on HBO's *The Wire*? Sound familiar? Martin O'Malley thinks it sounds awfully familiar, too. We investigate just how right O'Malley is to be pissed about it.



Tommy Carcetti

Ambitious guy with almost comically white "ethnic" last name and really good hair surprises establishment to become mayor.

Passionately bonks campaign donor in a crappy hotel room on the night of fund-raiser.

Let's not worry about school funding, because "kids don't vote."

Loves the sound of his own voice; listens to recordings of his speeches for fun.

Hard-charging, self-promoting married father of two uses Baltimore mayoralty to launch bid for governor.

Martin O'Malley
Ambitious guy with almost comically white
"ethnic" last name and likely his own hair
surprises the establishment to become mayor.

Refutes rumors of an affair in a press conference in which he passionately discusses "dirty-trick operatives."

Let's tell people we'll cut their electricity bills even though we don't have the authority.

Loves the sound of Irish rock, which he considers a real thing. Plays in a band called O'Malley's March for fun.

Actually has four kids.

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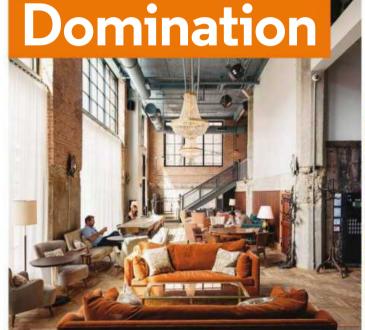
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→ The Soho House Plan

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For two decades, sono house—those private clubs-slash-rooftop pools exported from London—represented a luxury urban lifestyle more often associated with Sex and the City than with, well, anything actually fun and cool. But after embracing a newer, younger creative class, the revamped Soho House has become a successful combination of day-drinking haven and office for the self-employed, and can't seem to open new outposts fast enough BY ALICE GREGORY



THE ROOFTOP POOL DECK of New York's Soho House at 11 A.M. on a Tuesday answers a lot of questions I've had for a while now. Such as: Who skydives because there's a deal listed on Groupon? Who subscribes to the Thrillist? Who is buying all that rosé that liquor stores run out of every summer? And more generally: Who joins a private club in 2015? The answer, it turns out, is right in front of me.

The accoutrements of semi-creative success—MacBooks plastered with Supreme stickers, unblemished Stan Smiths, Parliament Lights—are strewn everywhere. Atop every other table is a half-finished green smoothie. Suntan lotion perfumes the air. The male uniform of Vilebrequin swim trunks (and nothing else) takes business casual to its logical end. To be clear though, people are working.

A male publicist in a caftan arrives. He sinks into the chaise longue cushion next to me, flags down a waiter, and orders a bottle of prosecco. His colleague, a male publicist not in a caftan, appears a few minutes later. They proceed to discuss the scheduling of a manicure for a client whose





• After business meetings or sommelier lessons, members can take a break beside the rooftop pool.

name I don't catch but who sounds like a real bitch. The prosecco is delivered in a chiller, along with a pair of realistic-looking plastic flutes. The male publicist in a caftan pours two glasses, hands one to the male publicist not in a caftan, and exclaims, "This is so much better than working out of an office!"

God, I think, what is this place?

UNTIL I BEGAN spending basically every day at Soho House, I *really* didn't know what it was. Like many people with a passing familiarity, my primary associations were (1) that episode of *Sex and the City* where Samantha impersonates a British lady to gain access to the pool and (2) the 2010 murder of a swimsuit designer, which took place in one of the club's bedrooms at the hands of her trust-fund boyfriend. That was pretty much it. I basically thought it was where people went before their bottle-service reservation.

But recently, it seemed like Soho House was in the midst of something relevantsuddenly opening, or announcing, one new exotic outpost after another. There are now a total of fifteen houses (eight of them are in the UK). Already this year, they opened one in Istanbul and "the Farmhouse" in Oxfordshire, and they'll open New York's second house, on Manhattan's Lower East Side, early next year. Following that are plans for Barcelona, downtown Los Angeles, Amsterdam, and, reportedly, Mumbai, Malibu, and Hong Kong. They also want to be in San Francisco, New Orleans, Austin, Brooklyn, Tokyo, and upstate New York. Worldwide, there are now 40,000 people in possession of the signature inky black card.

And, still, each house, it turns out, has a waiting list that far exceeds its membership.

This seemed kind of crazy to me, this semi-antiquated private-club thing suddenly being so popular they couldn't keep up with the demand. But it turned out that Soho House had made welcome this new kind of person-a deskless striver with a distaste for suits-that hadn't really existed when the club was founded in 1995. People who "make content" and seem to network with athleticism and real joy. People who describe themselves as "passionate." The movie producer who hasn't necessarily produced a movie; the guy in advertising who when you ask him what he does says, "I tell stories"; the "creative digital-platform co-consultant" (or whatever the fuck).

There are a few celebrities roaming around, but mainly it's home to an urban creative class of people who can afford the dues (about 160 bucks a month) and have internalized the hyper-contemporary idea that a fulfilling life is exclusive of having a boss. They hope that Soho House might be a good place to host a meeting with a client or, better yet, an investor.

When you describe it that way, the demographic is pretty legible to anyone who lives in a city or spends time online, which is to say everyone. The guy with that monetizable combination of cultural awareness and professional ambition working on his laptop from a coffee shop in Berlin? That's the most fetishized kind of worker right now. And the evident genius of Nick Jones, Soho House's founder, was his foresight, his prescient recognition of this discrete group and the aspirational-but-still-chill environment they might want to spend their time in.

You can waltz into any Soho House and experience a familiar kind of comfort: The light will be dim, the furniture will be plush and balding, the statement eyewear will be ubiquitous. You'll be greeted by your first name, and you can order an Eastern Standard (Grey Goose, lime juice, muddled cucumber, mint). The idea is that members let loose to the approximate degree they would at a friend's house: Curl up, but maybe don't let the soles of your shoes touch upholstery, don't invite the loudest guy from the Class of 2005. I know all this because I went and saw a bunch of these places.

THIS PAST SPRING, I flew to Istanbul for a "Sleepover." That's what they called it, at least. It was really an opening party for the new Soho House there, and it felt like a destination-wedding weekend, without the wedding. Istanbul was then their newest location. It was a nineteenth-century mansion, the former American embassy, and Soho House had paid a reported \$25 million for a fifty-one-year lease.

From the roof of the Bosphorus-adjacent five-story building, which has a tiled courtyard, frescoed walls, and an interior furnished with a buttload of kilims, you take in a stunning panoramic view of the city, marred only by the neon logo of a nearby Radisson Blu Hotel. The weekend's sprawling guest list was made up of "friends of Soho House," meaning members who are famous and/or close with Nick Jones. It included the asymmetrically pompadoured fashion designer Henry Holland; Professional British People Jemima Khan and Daisy Lowe; a bunch of actors, including Eddie Redmayne (Stephen Hawking) and Luke Evans (Middle-earth warrior); an uncountable number of real estate developers; and Millie Mackintosh, England's answer to Heidi Montag. There was a larger-than-average number of selfstyled "bad boys" (leather jackets, neck tattoos) and a not insignificant amount of sideboob on display. I'd describe the crowd as made up of the kind of people, foreign to me outside Henry James novels, who "run into each other" in foreign countries. These were the universal human ornaments of parties serving top-shelf liquor.

Throughout the weekend, there were dinners and dance parties, alfresco breakfasts and hushed discussions of colonics. I ate meals with a reporter from the *London Evening Standard* and two German journalists named Hiltrude and Dagmar.

And though it was a true vacation (I didn't see anyone on computers), the forty-eight hours of unbridled laughter and ease didn't feel all that different from what I'd heard other Soho Houses were like in less exotic locales in the middle of the week. That ethos—the defining ethos—I'd come to find, was made in the image of its founder.





• On the road? Overnight rooms are available for member use in all fifteen houses.

I WAS INTRODUCED to Nick Jones in Istanbul, but only briefly. His hands had been full: There were cheeks to kiss, flights to inquire about. But in London a week later, we met for dinner at the restaurant of the Dean Street Townhouse, which is located just a block from the original, still-operating Soho House. (The restaurant is just one of dozens of properties under the Soho House umbrella, including movie theaters, pizza parlors, burger joints, chicken restaurants, and nail salons.)

Jones's face, physiognomy, and mannerisms are exactly the same as the hypothetical face, physiognomy, and mannerisms Americans picture when they hear the word bloke. His eyes are a watery blue; his complexion is ruddy. He likes to eat and drink and talk; it's impossible to imagine him either consuming yogurt or exercising voluntarily. He looks so comfortable at dinner that he almost transforms into a piece of furniture. He is immensely pleasant to be around.

Born in suburban Surrey, which for my benefit he compares to Newport Beach, Jones, who is 51, says he was "brought up on quite chintzy stuff" and that he's "been reacting against it ever since." Every aspect of Soho House down to the last teacup is chosen or at the very least personally approved by Jones, who, despite his anachronistic masculinity, has very particular taste in everything from domestic furnishings to imported spirits.

I had been given a formal tour of Shoreditch House, in East London, a day earlier, and it indeed seemed the opposite of chintzy. We entered through a no-nonsense lobby, staffed by employees who looked like they'd seen the White Stripes live, multiple times at an impressionable age—tight jeans, Converse, deliberate haircuts. There was something called the Cowshed Spa (present at many but not all locations) on the ground floor. The hotel rooms—small, but prettily appointed and neutral in tone—were upstairs, as was a fitness center made

to look like a Soviet boxing gym (exposed pipes, analog medical scales, rusty lockers), a rooftop pool, a massive restaurant, a game room, and the club-like area—complete with copper bar—where everyone sat on settees, typing on laptops.

The tangible vestiges of the club's English origins are diffuse and not too aggressive; they're basically limited to the presence of baked beans on the breakfast menu and bottles of HP sauce if you ask for it. But these things, combined with the presence of people smoking on balconies and drinking during the day, present a sort of ambient cosmopolitanism that reads more "international" than it does distinctly British. It's like the physical equivalent of that accent the children of diplomats have: placeless, kinda fake-seeming, but totally appealing.

Technically, Soho House is a club in the way your rich uncle's country club is a club. Only instead of blazers and tennis doubles and Easter-egg hunts dutifully organized to distract the kids from their parents' feckless gin consumption, you get distressed denim and, to be perfectly honest and fair, quite a bit of productivity. And it's not the soft, Beefeater-enabled schmoozing that one typically thinks of upon hearing the words "private club." It's actual work—conference calls and contract negotiations and "check-ins" and whatever else people do, usually in offices, day in and day out.

It was good that my first formal introduction to Soho House was in England, not only because that's where it started but also because this kind of relationship to work is so un-American. "To hang" is not the verb we associate with professional discipline.

We have places for hedonism and places for productivity. But in England, leisure and work are closer bedfellows. Soho House is confounding at first to Americans (or at least this American) because it encourages a perverse combination of both: Take a breakfast meeting, pound out a few e-mails, jump in the pool, have some wine, eat

lunch, traipse back to the computer, work for a while, put a round of drinks on your expense account. Sure, private clubs have been the homes to business-making forever, but merger talk on the ninth fairway has a different feel to it than beckoning over some guy in headphones to take a look at the provisionary logo for your new juice company.

When I ask Jones about his expansion plans—how he chooses where he wants to open future houses—he admits that he has "a reckless sense of where we'd like to be." Buildings with Soho House potential are smaller than hotels, which typically have uniformly shaped and sized rooms. Soho House Chicago is in a former conveyor-belt

factory; Barcelona (2016) will be in a nineteenth-century apartment building and Amsterdam (2017) in a university hall. "It only takes me a minute to decide. It's about soul, location—it's a gut feeling."

Every new site has its own challenges. In Istanbul, finding employees who were both fluent in English and confident enough to treat guests with on-brand familiarity was difficult. Familiarizing midwesterners with the brand and convincing them of its affordability and lack of pretense was the big hurdle in Chicago. Regardless, go to any one of these Soho Houses and you'll feel more or less the same.

That's because "it's not about the age," Jones says, "it's about their soul. Our favorite member is still the struggling screenwriter. That's what gives the place interest." Though I'm deeply disinclined to believe that—why would any business owner prefer a poor client to a rich one?—it's undeniable that those are the people you see inside.

THE BRAND PREDATES the recession by almost fifteen years and performed fabulously for the first decade-plus of its existence, but it took the collapse of the global economy to make the place's true mission clear. In March 2010, the club "purged" close to a thousand New York members, most of them in finance. "We are trying to get the club back to its creative roots," Jones told the *New York Post* at the time. Concurrent with the mass i-banker expulsion was an effort to crack down on party-time bathroom sharing. Brushed-steel signs were mounted that read, "Anyone found in pairs in the toilet will be asked to leave the club

The ambient cosmopolitanism is like the physical equivalent of that accent children of diplomats have: placeless, kinda fakeseeming, but totally appealing.

immediately and their membership will be suspended." And as the harder-partying and financially predatory members were on their way out, the precariously employed were on their way in.

"I saw it happening before my eyes," says Pierre Dourneau, the director of North American operations. "Many people lost their jobs but kept their memberships. Rather than go crazy at home, they came here and sat in the drawing room. A lot of them were on Facebook doing nothing."

These people, they'd all come here to ride out the storm and, in so doing, had found one another. In the three months I spent hanging around Soho House, not a single

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member or employee I spoke to failed to use the phrase "like-minded people" within five minutes of conversation. At first I glossed over it, in the same way I do when I hear about things like "thinking outside the box" or read the proper nouns in Harry Potter books. But after a while, the words assumed the gravity of a private joke. What was "like-minded" a euphemism for? I wondered. "Class" seemed too generic. "Scientology" too creepy to even joke about. Like-minded? What were their minds like?

joke: Every summer, it's like, 'Let's see how many new friends we can make.' Because once people realize you have a membership and access to a private pool, it's like, 'Oh, my God!' Everybody wants to be your friend."

That's actually sort of exactly how Kristin Kremers and Elisabeth Cardiello met. Kremers, a 28-year-old video producer, was a member of Soho House for about a year when she met Cardiello, a 31-year-old coffee entrepreneur, at a CrossFit class. Within a few months Cardiello had become a member.



Though it's private and (at least semi-) exclusive, Soho House shares many qualities with cool hotels.

IF YOU ARE UNDER 27 and want to join your local Soho House, they'll cut you a half-off rate—\$1,000 annually. Which, depending on where you live, is about the price of the YMCA or two months of desk rent in a co-working space in Manhattan.

Eli Velez, who has been a member since he was 25, is a good representative of the sort of young person Soho House is courting with this deal. He worked until recently as an assistant to Kanye West's creative director, lives in Harlem, and takes the subway to Soho House, where he spends the entire day, at least five times per week. "I work here, I sleep here, I take showers here," he says, laughing. Velez now hosts regular parties for Soho House with the express aim of getting young people like himself to join.

"The preconceived notion people have about this place is that it's super stuck-up," Velez says. That's what he thought, too, three years ago, when he first came as the guest of a friend. But he was overcome by everyone's graciousness and now proselytizes to his friends, who are, like he was, wary at first. "It's like a personal oasis—I know that sounds really corny," he says. "We have a

too, and soon they were working side by side at Soho House almost every day.

It was only 11 A.M. when they introduced themselves to me, but the pair had already been in each other's company for five hours. They met at dawn for a workout, where Hugh Jackman dropped in with friends and Kremers and Cardiello, both of whom are pert, pretty, and exceptionally friendly. showed them proper form on handstand push-ups. When that was over, they went to Daybreaker, a rave hosted at 7 A.M., at which they danced, soberly, with hundreds of others, including a man dressed like a carrot. By the time they arrived at Soho House, they had burned multiple cheeseburgers' worth of calories and never left each other's sight. It wasn't even that weird of a day for them.

FULL DISCLOSURE, FINALLY: Though on paper I might seem like an ideal Soho House member (I freelance; writing for magazines is creative-ish), I'm not the sort of person who would naturally be susceptible to their sales pitch. I'm not going to take advantage of industry-specific lectures led by "leaders within creative fields"; I'm not going to attend group sommelier lessons

(offered throughout the month). Daylong proximity to aging rock stars in Speedos doesn't thrill me. The Soho House brand of joie de vivre, where the joie is the ambient din of agreed-upon fun and the vivre is diversionary activities, doesn't offend me, but it does not interest me. I know how snotty all this sounds, and I only cop to it because gradually, over the course of the months I spent there. I was converted.

A big part of growing up, at least for me, has been dispensing with the idea that obscurity and difficulty are necessary corollaries to virtue. Popular stuff is popular for a reason: Taylor Swift is great, and SoulCycle works. Soy lattes with Splenda are undeniably delicious. And a private club in the middle of the city with super-comfortable couches and super-friendly employees and super-nice bathrooms, where you're surrounded by attractive people who aren't allowed to talk on the phone, all for way less than an Equinox membership? Well, I'm sorry, but it rules.

Earlier this summer, at the end of my self-imposed "residency," I took my husband to the Soho House roof for a drink. It was balmy and just getting dark when we arrived. I kicked off my sandals, nestled into one of the toweled, extra-deep pool benches, and motioned for him to follow suit. He looked at me blankly, before perching at the edge of the seat. He said he'd rather keep his shoes on. I rolled my eyes; I was half-expecting this, frankly.

I gaily ordered a watermelon-based cocktail; he, solemnly, a beer. Electronic music thumped quietly; a guy in a fedora (definitely on something) danced perilously close to the water's edge. Tan men reclined atop cushions and strained to light the cigarettes of even tanner, even more supine women.

My husband is what you'd call an indoor animal. As he looked out on the tableau, he squinted, not with derision, really, but more out of deep, deep confusion.

"I just don't get how people can relax like this in *public*," he said with sincere neutrality.

"Who cares?" I replied.

No one else seemed to. His fully clothed, bespectacled, skeptical presence rendered him invisible to everyone around us. As it should have. Isn't that the entire point? We seek greatest comfort in the places—be they friend groups or twenty-first-century country clubs—that grant us a kind of oblivion to outside discrimination. There are plenty of qualities and actions and habits of mind worth judging, but paying five bucks a day to do your work in peace and maybe jump in a pool doesn't strike me as one of them.

 $\begin{array}{l} \textbf{ALICE GREGORY} \ is \ a \ writer \ living \\ in \ Brooklyn. \end{array}$









You'll Never

For decades, the biggest swinging dicks in the world did their grandest dick-swinging at New York's famed FOUR SEASONS. Ah, but seasons change. Today the old power den is shuttering, and its notorious owner is battling a sex-assault case that could send him to prison. ROBERT DRAPER on how the demise of the iconic eatery marks the twilight of a singular sort of masculine power

Power-Lunch in



CANNOT CHANGE the way I am," Julian Niccolini said as he nervously twisted a package of sweetener into a little ball. "I'm a people person. I love people. I'm never gonna change that, even when somebody tells me I'm a terrible human being."

We were seated in the Pool Room of Julian's legendary Midtown Manhattan restaurant, The Four Seasons, at table 89, a perch from which, at lunchtime, one could take in the entire lustrous panorama of power diners reposed around a shimmering pool of water. A few feet away from us, at a lesser table, Niccolini had himself once sat as a customer.

It was 1977 and he was 24 at the time, an Italian émigré working as a waiter in a pricey French restaurant. His co-workers were always belittling the Four Seasons—too big, too impersonal—but he saw potential in its grandeur,

 Four Seasons fixtures: from left. Roger Ailes, Martha Stewart, Elton John, Gayle King, Henry Kissinger, co-owner Julian Niccolini (with Julianna Margulies), Bill Clinton, Barbara Walters, Diane Sawyer, Lesley Stahl, and Rudy Giuliani.

in its prime location at the corner of 52nd and Park Avenue, and in its emphasis on seasonal ingredients. That summer night. Julian decided he would like to work at The Four Seasons.

And so the owners hired him to oversee the Grill Room, the cavernous walnutpaneled space down the hall from the Pool Room. Before long, he had helped transform The Four Seasons into the most consequential lunch spot in America—the culinary destination for visiting celebrities, the deal-cutting venue for CEOs. Thirty-eight years later, Julian Niccolini still lorded over the Grill Room and its billionaire habitués like their preening viceroy.

Soon all of this will change forever. A year from now, the restaurant will be gone, forced from the Seagram Building-the only home it's known since its creation in 1959-so that the building's owner, Aby Rosen, can install a restaurant of his own. A year from now, insinuation that his shelf life as a restaurateur has expired. Julian and his longtime business partner, Alex von Bidder, plan to show that The Four Seasons can flourish elsewhere, even when stripped of its historical grandiosity and thrown into the shark tank of edgier restaurants run by culinary artistes half Julian's age. "People today want to have fun at restaurants," Julian told me. He could adapt, he figured. Fun was his thing. Fun had always been his thing. Maybe people misunderstood this about him-that even his missteps were made in good fun. But he could not change who he was.

BEFORE EVERYTHING changes, you would do well to spend a couple of hours and approximately half your life savings at The Four Seasons. The Grill Room, designed by the famed architects Philip Johnson and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, feels like a hypermasculine cousin of the Library of Congress,



· Julian Niccolini's bawdy affection for female clients was, for years, shrugged off as an "Italianism."

Julian might be a convicted criminal, perhaps done in by his inability to change while the rest of the world changes around him. For this past May, the 62-year-old co-owner is alleged to have assaulted a woman at the bar of the Grill Room—fondling her before she managed to break free and later bring a felony charge against him. To many who have observed his antics over the decades. the episode seemed not only plausible but also metaphoric, further evidence that both The Four Seasons and its frontman belonged to an earlier, brazenly chauvinistic era.

Julian sees the future quite differently. He intends to be cleared of the criminal charge against him. He also intends to disprove the all wood and bronze and soundtracked by the low hum of commerce and the gentle swishing of the chain curtains.

Enter and you encounter a white-haired, aquiline-nosed man. This is Julian Niccolini. Since you're new here, he will glance down at the seating chart and then say to one of the young ladies beside him, "Table 50"which is one of the eleven tables in Siberia. also known as the terrace, a world away from the titans seated around the twentyodd tables on the Grill Room's ground floor. Alternatively, you can book a table for dinner down the hall in the Pool Room, superintended by Alex von Bidder, the steady and discreet superego to Julian's

wisecracking id. Here, around the glittering pool, the transaction is of a different sort; as super-chef David Chang recalled of his first visit, "It looked like the perfect place to close the deal with a date, surrounded by all those silver foxes and beautiful things."

Whichever room you choose, you'll notice two things. First is that the food is exorbitant (over \$70 for some entrées) and often lackluster. A wild snapper with corn and guajillo sauce I had at lunch seemed a tired throwback to the nouveau-southwestern craze a couple of decades back. The ahi tuna burger from the bar menu was resoundingly inedible. Such trifles, as even restaurant critics who have consistently praised The Four Seasons acknowledge, are ultimately beside the point. You come here to bask in the spaciousness of what Jackie Onassis liked to call "the cathedral." You come to take your rightful place in the pantheon and to be seen occupying that choice real estate. About a thousand faithful Four Seasons customers have a "house account"-meaning the bill typically goes directly to their companies. My old boss, former GQ editor-in-chief Art Cooper, had one such arrangement with The Four Seasons. According to Julian, Art spent about \$200,000 a year at his favorite restaurant and never once saw a receipt-all the way up until June of 2003, when he rose from his corner booth, lumbered over to a barstool, succumbed to a stroke, and died at the age of 65.

That's the second thing you'll notice about The Four Seasons: Its clientele is, eh, not youthful. Still, it's possible to look down from Siberia upon the octo- and nonagenarians and to imagine them as younger, hungrier, Bonfire of the Vanities versions of their present-day selves.

Julian Niccolini was present at their ascension, and they at his. On the subway to work each morning, he studied the Times, the Daily News, and Women's Wear Daily to find out which celebrities were in town, what schemes the ultra-wealthy were up to, and who was cavorting with whom. The Grill Room's seating chart became Julian's interpretation of America's pecking order. Even the richest of patrons would come to learn that this was Julian's roost. As longtime customer Bill White, the CEO of the development firm Constellations Group, puts it, "The Four Seasons is one place where the customer isn't always right."

Julian's reputation as a host persisted to the point that he was eventually penning columns in Gotham, Details, and the New York Observer, where he'd flatter this or that "beautiful" customer while gossiping about others (Bethenny Frankel urinating in a wine bucket). He also dispensed wisdom that ranged from the practical (like when to wear a linen suit) to the prurient (like what to do when a woman hits on you when





• For its grandeur, Jackie Onassis called The Four Seasons "the cathedral." For the clientele it hosted, the restaurant inspired the term "power lunch."

your wife is standing nearby). At least a few uninitiated readers must have wondered just who this pretentious reptile was.

Back at the restaurant, of course, the old warhorses roared with appreciation when Julian presided over a lascivious Valentine's Day menu that included Hanky Panky Veal Shanky and Peek-a-Boo Polenta; or when he distributed wiener appetizers the day Anthony Weiner went down in scandal; or when he reportedly arranged for a woman to approach Vernon Jordan's table and expose her titanic breasts to him for a solid thirty seconds.

The restaurant critic John Mariani wrote in his 1994 book about The Four Seasons that Julian's "eccentricities were shrugged off as mere Italianisms." And Julian—who has been married for the past thirty-three years and has two adult daughters—played his charm for laughs. For instance, in an advice column in 2006, he wrote that while only an idiot would have sex with a coworker, "sleeping with a client, or customer, of course, is different."

Ten years later, the joke was stale, dangerously so.

MAYBE THE INCIDENT that ended in Julian's arrest had begun, that night in May, in fun. However things started, it certainly seems the young woman saw something dark in the restaurateur's alleged overtures. It's equally clear that Julian Niccolini's bawdy act wasn't playing as well these days as it had in the past.

Three months before the alleged assault, The Four Seasons hosted a high-ticket fund-raiser attended by several of the city's celebrated new chefs and sommeliers. They were uniformly younger than Julian, raised in a different era. They did not flirt with the customers. Did not stare at cleavage. Did not whisper to a male client that the female a few tables away appeared not to be wearing any underwear. They were aware of Julian Niccolini's reputation as a horndog. But they respected what he had accomplished and were inclined to give him the benefit of the doubt

Still, that night several of them were appalled as Julian held forth, "saying the most unbelievable shit," recalls one attendee. "The stuff that came out of his mouth—three or four references to having

sex. 'It's like fucking a woman'—that kind of thing. In front of like 300 people. Obviously he's got a bunch of 60-to-80-year-old guys who think it's okay to objectify women. But it struck a lot of us as completely out of line. Personally, I wouldn't let him within a hundred feet of my wife."

That generational divide may have been at play on the evening

of May 9, when The Four Seasons hosted a Fête de la Fleur champagne reception followed by a six-course meal with twenty-one tastings of wine. It was reportedly about nine o'clock, and Julian and the young woman-whose father is said to be a former business associate of his-were at the bar. According to the police complaint she later filed. Julian kissed her while pulling her body toward his. When the young woman resisted, the report says, Julian reached into the back of her dress, tore her bra, and then groped her, resulting in scratch marks on her back and a bruise on her hip while he attempted to pull down her stockings. "I am further informed,"

wrote the detective in the report, "that informant repeatedly told defendant to stop and that she was trying to break free of defendant's hold while he was doing this but that she was unable to."

Two days later, she paid a visit to the NYPD Midtown North station. According to the *New York Post*, the police arranged for her to call Julian while they taped the conversation. In the *Post's* account, the Four Seasons co-owner (who, through his attorney, has denied all of the allegations while refusing further comment; the young woman has also fended off media inquiries) apologized to his

At a recent Four Seasons soiree, Julian held forth, "saying the most unbelievable shit," one attendee told me. "Personally, I wouldn't let him within a hundred feet of my wife."

accuser on the phone while pleading, "Let's not go any further with this."

The Special Victims Division charged Julian with first-degree sexual abuse, punishable by up to seven years' imprisonment. He surrendered to the authorities early on the morning of June 3. Julian was freed without bail and before long was back at The Four Seasons and presiding over lunch.

"Personally, yes, it's hurt me," Julian told me of the suggestion that some would view him as a sexual predator. "It's very hurtful." Friends took to the web to voice their support for Julian. Mauro Maccioni—the son of Sirio Maccioni, owner of one of Manhattan's other famed power spots, Le Cirque—wrote on





• Regulars at the power haunt: clockwise from top left, Brendan Gill and Jackie Onassis; Truman Capote and Lee Radziwill; Richard Gere; Andy Warhol; Warren Buffett; Alana and Rod Stewart.

Facebook that his friend was "a great Tuscan gentleman." The radio entrepreneur Bill O'Shaughnessy—a Four Seasons sultan who loved to engage in off-color ribaldry with Julian—added, "The book on you is that you're a big flirt...but totally harmless."

"The guy is a flirt. He's Italian. They like the ladies," Bill White told me. "Okay, maybe he had some drinks. But I'm sure it was meant in fun."

Less easy to square with their belief that the incident was overblown was the fact that he had faced a somewhat similar accusation in 1991, from an employee who alleged that Julian sexually harassed her throughout her five-year tenure. (That case was settled confidentially, and I was unable to reach her.) I asked a number of longtime female patrons of the restaurant what they made of the charges against Julian. "I did tend to think he was a little too familiar, and maybe having a little too much fun," said famed dining critic Gael Greene. "But it didn't bother me. I'm sorry to say that Julian never tried to seduce me. Probably I should be embarrassed to admit that. Perhaps he thought it best not to attack restaurant critics."

The queen of New York gossip columnists, 92-year-old Liz Smith, has patronized The Four Seasons since it opened, often with the financier Pete Peterson. "Pete found him amusing in the way that teenaged boys find dirty jokes amusing," she told me. "I've always seen him as one of those guys who wanted to appear that they were having a lot more sex than they actually were. Of course, I'm hopelessly out of date. And

I hate to say this, but sometimes I think the world has totally lost its sense of humor. I think women are generally used to men making passes. It would have to be pretty bad for me to go to the police."

To others, it's a matter of dignity in an industry that's only recently begun to view women as more than objects of lust.

"I don't know enough about what happened at The Four Seasons," Amanda Cohen, the 40-year-old chef/owner of the acclaimed East Village restaurant Dirt Candy, wrote me in an e-mail. "But I've been around long enough to see this business change from owners and investors who treated restaurants like their

own personal playgrounds to what you have today—which is owners, investors, and chefs who treat it like an office where sexual behavior isn't tolerated"

CHANGE HAPPENS, and the great institutions are often at pains to adapt. In June, it was reported that a young man entered the Yale Club wearing a T-shirt that read fuck forever, prompting fulminations from the Old Guard that civilization had reached its nadir. Food & Wine announced its Best Restaurants of the Year, and the sole New York winner was Cosme, a noisy year-old Mexican joint housed in a former strip club.

I tried to get a table at Cosme, but it was impossible. I also tried to get into Ralph Lauren's Polo Bar, which attracts

celebrities the way The Four Seasons used to—and where Julian recently dined and was later heard to scoff, "Who's gonna eat at a restaurant in a basement? It won't last." By contrast, when I sought a lunch reservation at The Four Seasons' Grill Room the following day, OpenTable informed me that there were tables at any time I wished (not mentioning, of course, that I would be seated in Siberia while seats on the main floor awaited its faithful titans).

"And don't change a goddamn thing!" Bill O'Shaughnessy had thundered while toasting The Four Seasons during its fiftieth-anniversary bash. In yanking its lease, Aby Rosen has left the restaurant no choice. But Alex and Julian have decided to make a virtue out of the changes thrust upon them. Julian told me that they'll likely move downtown, and their new establishment will still be called The Four Seasons, but that it will not be The Four Seasons of old. It might be nice, Julian allowed, to move beyond the ceaseless jockeying for the optimal power table—all that "competition for attention," as he put it, "taking all these calls, nonstop." It might also be nice to have a more manageable space, not having to serve 300 meals all at once.

"The future is a much more relaxed atmosphere," he said. "People want to go out, have fun, and drink a lot. The food is basically secondary. Of course, The Four Seasons will still have tremendous architecture, incredible service, and great

"Julian never tried to seduce me.
Probably I should be embarrassed to
admit that. Perhaps he thought it
best not to attack restaurant critics,"
Gael Greene told me.

food. But it will be more casual. Because that's what people want today."

The enthusiasm in his voice was, at best, marginal. Then again, it had been a long twenty-four hours. The previous day, he and others said good-bye to an old Four Seasons mainstay, JPMorgan's star dealmaker Jimmy Lee, who had died the previous week while exercising at home. Lee was 62, Julian's age. The place was packed all afternoon and evening with a who's who of the finance elite, and no one was leaving; everyone was grieving and transacting at the restaurant. A sad day, a very good day—this was how it worked, always, seasons changing yet somehow still the same.

ROBERT DRAPER is a GQ correspondent.

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11

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PABLO COBAR WILL NEVER



Despite perishing in a cloud of gun smoke back in 1993, the cartel boss who once supplied 80 percent of America's cocaine has never been more alive. He's in the movies, at the bookstore, streaming on Netflix—and that's just in the States. Both romanticized and demonized in his homeland, Pablo has become a new kind of Colombian export: a gangster tourist attraction, a profit center in the business of remembering. JESSE KATZ reports from a country that can never forget the bad old days, and isn't sure it wants to



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NORDSTROM MEN'S SHOP AS DUSK SETTLES on the Magdalena Valley, the jungly middle stretch of Colombia's great river basin, the hippopotamuses bawl and snort. The indelicate groans of these multi-ton beasts border on comedic, but mostly their ruckus is a fearsome thing—a primal ritual that has churned these waters ever since Pablo Escobar imported four hippos to his narcosanctuary, Hacienda Nápoles, in the 1980s.

The hippos came not from Africa but from America, the nation whose appetites and prohibitions would catapult the cocaine king onto the Forbes billionaires list. He went shopping for them at the International Wildlife Park, a bygone drive-through zoo outside Dallas that featured camel rides and a boxing kangaroo. For one male and three females, plus a menagerie of other exotics, Pablo reportedly paid \$2 million in cash.

Flown to Colombia on a military-grade Hercules, the hippos found paradise in the swampy heat of Hacienda Nápoles, halfway between Medellín and Bogotá. During the 7,000-acre retreat's heyday, when the fortune of cocaine was still new and wondrous and too opportune for most Colombians to question, Pablo opened Hacienda Nápoles to the public: "Son, this zoo is the people's," he told his eldest, Juan Pablo. "As long as I'm alive, I'll never charge, because I like that poor people can come and see this spectacle."

The hippos have not only survived their master but multiplied: to a bloat of twentynine, or thirty-six, or maybe sixty. Nobody really knows.

VILLAINS COME IN all shapes and sizes, but there is always something curious about evil geniuses who turn out to be less imposing than their reputations. His chins were legendary, square hunks of padded bone engulfed by a thick, doughy ring, like a man who had swallowed his travel pillow. His mustache expanded by the year, from a tight Burt Reynolds to a flowing Joseph Stalin, usually framing a distrustful smirk.

 Much like their former master, the hippos of Hacienda Nápoles come and go as they please.



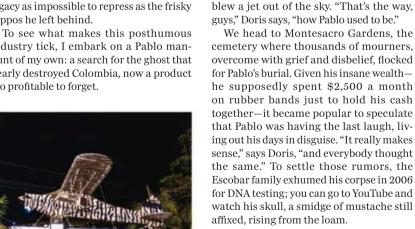


• Few other drug lords are commercially viable enough to have their own gift shops.

His hair was long and curly and cleaved by a side part, the way lesser-known nineteenthcentury American presidents wore it, and at five feet five he appeared shorter than his teenage bride and a good many of his later mistresses. Pablo Escobar—once the most hunted man on the planet-was, we can say it now, kind of a schlub.

Twenty-two years after his death, at 44, on a Medellín rooftop, where a U.S.-Colombian posse of soldiers, sleuths, mercenaries, and rivals caught him lumbering barefoot and disheveled across the terracotta, that fleshy image has never held more currency, in Colombia or abroad. Alive, Pablo was a murderer and a philanthropist, a kidnapper and a congressman, a populist antihero who corrupted the institutions that tried to contain him and slaughtered thousands of compatriots who got in his way. Safely in the grave, he has spawned an entertainment-industrial complex-movies, books, soap operas, souvenirs-his legacy as impossible to repress as the frisky hippos he left behind.

industry tick, I embark on a Pablo manhunt of my own: a search for the ghost that nearly destroyed Colombia, now a product too profitable to forget.



The grass around Pablo's grave site has been stomped bare. The plot, which he shares with his parents, is a minimalist quad of white garden pebbles. One of his sisters supplies the rocks, hundreds of kilos a year, so visitors can pocket a memento.

Signing up for one of Medellín's compet-

ing Pablo tours, I catch the Nissan Urvan,

a twelve-seater with tinted windows, that

departs from the Exito supermarket at eight

thirty every morning. It appears to have

ESCOBAR stenciled on the windshield, but

a double take shows that to be escolar:

We are visiting the drug lord's landmarks

I join a crossroads of Germans, Argentines,

Canadians, and Australians as our matronly

guide, Doris, takes her seat atop an ice

chest. For the rest of the morning, Doris

runs through a rehearsed account of Pablo's

greatest hits: He ordered the killing of pros-

ecutors, editors, presidential candidates. He

had Colombia's equivalent of FBI headquar-

ters dynamited and financed a raid that mas-

sacred half the Supreme Court. He offered

a bounty on police that turned Medellín's

slum dwellers into an army of sicarios,

annihilating 500 officers. His henchmen

For about \$25 in Colombian pesos,

in a school bus.

Before we board the minibus again, Doris puts out a spread of DVDs and stickers: a



TOP: ERIC FORD/ON LOCATION NEWS; COURTESY OF PATHÉ FILMS; CARACOL TV

pop-up gift shop. Whatever we purchase will be autographed by Roberto Escobarelder brother, former bagman-who is at this moment awaiting our visit. The discs include the fine ESPN documentary The Two Escobars, encased in a homemade sleeve and retitled The King of Coke. I buy it for about \$4. Doris assures us that the money is not for Roberto but for his charitable foundation. A horseman in his youth. Roberto claims to have discovered, through vears of treating equine viruses, a cure eureka!-for AIDS.

We skip the stone town house where Pablo was felled, a for sale sign blocking the window, and zip to Roberto's place. He lives in the leafy hills above the tourist district, at the end of a steep driveway, behind towering walls topped with glass shards. When the gate swings open, we pull up to a two-story brick villa, a shrine to "a good soul with a vision for the future," as Roberto has written of his brother.

Our host emerges in a turquoise Polo shirt and black Polo jeans, squinting from behind thick rectangular glasses. At 68, Roberto is sturdy and sharp, but hobbled still from a letter bomb delivered to his jail cell during the dozen years he served for conspiracy. The explosion cost him half his hearing and, even after twenty-seven surgeries, much of his sight. He signs our purchases with a Sharpie, then adds a fingerprint for authenticity.

"I want to thank you all for visiting," Roberto says. "Ésta es su casa."

"This is your house," Doris translates. "You can come back anytime—with money!"

AFTER PABLO'S demise, Hacienda Nápoles fell into ruins, a grotesquerie picked apart by looters. Many animals died. Some were stolen, a few rescued. Only the hippostoo ornery, too impervious—thrived as the ranch devolved back to nature. Their progeny today are the centerpiece of the governmentsanctioned Theme Park Hacienda Nápoles, part ecotourism experiment, part culturalreclamation scheme.

A hippo-themed restaurant stands above the artichoke-hued reservoir that Pablo first dredged; a hollowed-out hippo sculpture invites photo ops within its open jaw. Closer to the water, a piped-in recording credits the theme park with having devised "an audacious rescue and conservation plan," which keeps Hippo Lake's dozens of inhabitants "safe and in view of our visitors."

Although barbed wire appears to enclose the seventeen-acre basin, I would learn that the creatures soaking here are captives of habit, confined only to the extent they choose to be. "Nobody's ever been able to capture them—or even tried," general manager Oberdan Martínez tells me. "You could say they're free."

THE COMMODIFICATION of Pablo is an awkward development for many Colombians, having struggled for a generation to overcome the collective trauma he visited on them. With his Faustian slogan plata o plomo-accept the bribe or get pumped full of lead—he turned Medellín into the murder capital of the world (6,349 killings in 1991), a badland no right-minded tourist would have visited, and pushed Colombia to the brink of a narcocracy.







 Javier Bardem will soon portray Pablo. following in the footsteps of (from top) Adrian Grenier, Benicio Del Toro, and Andrés Parra.

Given a choice, the country would prefer that we behold all that has changed since the Medellín Cartel's collapse: a surging middle class, a plummeting murder rate, a flood of vacationers lured by the government's promise that "the only risk is wanting to stay." Starbucks entered the market last year. Mark Zuckerberg showed up this year to expand Internet access. The reigning Miss Universe, Paulina Vega, has chided anyone who would paint her homeland in tired clichés. "We are now in one of the best points," she says, "of the whole history."

But the same opportunism that fueled Pablo's empire—the entrepreneurial impulse that radiates across the culture—is not about to let Colombians forgo mining his story now, no matter how crass or artful. macabre or sanitized, the telling, Pablo's son, Juan Pablo Escobar, has written a book, So has Pablo's sister Alba Marina. Pablo's sister Luz Maria has also written one, though she has delayed publishing hers, she told me, while she shops it for a movie deal. Pablo's brother Roberto has written two books, the first already pursued by Oliver Stone—one of several long-gestating Hollywood projects. Javier Bardem and John Leguizamo have both been cast to play Pablo in competing biopics, a genre deftly spoofed by HBO's Entourage, while Benicio Del Toro recently portrayed him in Escobar: Paradise Lost. This August, Netflix launched Narcos, a ten-episode series based on two DEA agents featured in the Mark Bowden best-seller Killing Pablo.

Also on Netflix now is El Patrón del Mal ("The Boss of Evil")-a seventy-fourepisode telenovela tracing Pablo's trail of destruction—the most viewed premiere in Colombian history. To inhabit El Patrón, actor Andrés Parra devoured every Pablo book and documentary he could find. He filled his cell phone with Pablo's voice. He even visited a psychologist for insight into Pablo's contradictory aspirations, the way his ruthlessness co-existed with generosity, even benevolence.

"Escobar should be a required course in our schools," says Parra, meeting me at his Bogotá office in skintight bicycle gear, having labored post-Pablo to shed almost eighty pounds. "Everything runs through him, like a spinal column: politics, sports, fame, fortune, the modern history of our country."

Few outlaws, anywhere, have wielded more power over their own state. Its judicial mechanisms too fragile to restrain him, Colombia vowed to deliver Pablo to U.S. authorities, assuming he could be captured; Pablo, fashioning himself a patriot, first offered to pay off Colombia's multi-billion-dollar debt, then terrorized the nation into adopting a new constitution that banned extradition. On that assurance, Pablo agreed to surrender, building himself a five-star prison-La Catedral-on a scenic Medellín hilltop. He stayed there for just over a year, with a disco and a bar and a parade of busty beauty queens, until an embarrassed Colombian government tried to relocate him to a real lockup. As the army moved in, Pablo slipped out the back.

SHOT ONCE IN the head, then again in the heart, Pepe staggered and crumpled. As he writhed on his side, two more $.375\text{-}caliber\ Holland\ \&\ Holland\ Magnum$





VINCE CAMUTO

cartridges, a classic of the big-game hunter's arsenal, were dispatched into his bulges and folds. The marksmen were a fatherson team, proprietors of Colombia's only Porsche franchise; they arrived with their own taxidermist.

The hunt for Pepe, in 2009, was the first hint that Pablo's hippos were beyond the Theme Park Hacienda Nápoles's control. Alphas rule the species; they keep harems and expel competitors. It was thus that Pepe, ostracized from Hippo Lake, shambled out right through the barbed wire and down the river valley, surfacing in a farming village hours away. Stressed and confused, he bulldozed crops and brutalized cattle, menacing fishermen along the mighty Magdalena. Colombian authorities looked everywhere for a zoo that would take him, but none wanted the risk or expense.

Biologically, the decision to eliminate Pepe-an invasive species run amok-was not hard to justify. It might have gone off without a hitch, too, if a photo of his fresh carcass, surrounded by the grinning army troops who cordoned off the area, had not landed in the newspapers. In a country eager to turn the page on its bloody past, the image of a hippo slaughter became a PR catastrophe, a lone tubby beast versus a state that solves everything with violence.

ON THE DAY a bullet entered his right temple, Pablo Escobar kept calling his son, lingering on the phone longer than was safe. He had been on the run ever since ditching La Catedral, a \$10 million price on his head, and as he grew more isolated and desperate, the government used his children as bait. Vigilantes bombed the apartment tower where Juan Pablo and his baby sister lived with their mother. Maria Victoria Henao, whose lovalty allowed Pablo to pose as a familv man. Police moved them to a guarded hotel while covert U.S. operatives, sweeping the skies for wireless signals, cinched the dragnet. Juan Pablo pleaded

with his father not to call again. The next time the phone rang, a reporter was bearing the inevitable news.

"Whoever killed him, I'm going to kill you fucking bastards myself!" Juan Pablo blurted on live radio. He was 16

In the chaotic aftermath, as gun-toting police mugged for pictures with Pablo's corpse, Juan Pablo tried to retract the threat. But the damage was done, and for much of Colombia his image as the petulant heir to the Medellín Cartel was cemented. If he was to survive, the family would have to flee. One embassy after another refused them visas. He turned to the Red Cross, the United Nations. "Never in my life had I felt like an alien on this planet," Juan Pablo tells me in Argentina, where he eventually landed. To secure his exit papers, the young patriarch needed a new identity. Given only minutes, Juan Pablo flipped through a phone book, settling on Sebastián Marroquín: a Colombian everyman.

Even under his adopted name, in his adopted country, Juan Pablo was never far from his father's shadow-from the expectation, he says, that "I would convert myself into Pablo Escobar 2.0." As Juan Pablo grew up, becoming an architect, a husband, a father, he kept asking

At the height of the manhunt, Pablo was often forced to live as a refugee himself. Sometimes he retreated to the jungle, trudging through the peat, drinking from lakes.

> himself who Pablo Escobar's son should be, how he was supposed to live with such a ruinous legacy. It was a question that in many ways pertained to all of Colombia, its deep internal wounds still inducing something akin to cultural PTSD: what to remember, what to forget, what to romanticize and stigmatize, what to excavate and appraise and peddle. After a decade of exile, Juan Pablo composed a letter to the children of his father's most eminent victims—the sons of an ambushed presidential candidate, of a slain justice minister-begging forgiveness and asking to meet. From these reunions, the documentary Sins of My Father was born. When the movie screened at Sundance in 2010, Juan Pablo received an invitation to attend. He says the U.S. embassy in Buenos Aires awarded him a visa; three days later, due to an "error," it was revoked. "The error," he writes in Pablo Escobar: Mi Padre, "was being the son of Pablo Escobar."

> Seeking more commercial ways to reckon with his patrimony, Juan Pablo has detoured into fashion. He runs a brand, Escobar Henao, in an unmarked Medellín factory, transforming T-shirts into \$95 "flags of peace." The shirts reproduce mundane artifacts of his father's identity, most with puckish pre-narco photos, while also challenging those images with handwritten appeals to self-reflection. "We Colombians unfortunately have a tendency to cover up our errors," chief designer Fredy Bedoya tells me. "We need to face them."

> For all the introspection and rationalization mustered, Juan Pablo's brand remains strictly an export. Denounced by the families of his father's victims—one compared the garments to "commercializing Hitler"-Escobar Henao is not sold in Colombia.

> MEDELLÍN IS Colombia's Shangri-la, a deep semitropical bowl crowned by misty emerald bluffs, and yet its steepest inclines, like those of Rio or La Paz, have sprouted a jumble of shantytowns, where the poor look down on the rich. Barrio Pablo Escobar clings to the northeastern slopes, the most enduring reminder that not every deed of his was destructive. When a hillside garbage dump burst into flames thirty years ago, exposing the misery of the city's scavenging class, Pablo shamed the elite by developing a 400-home tract for the

Years after adopting a new identity, Pablo's son is publicly reckoning with his family legacy.







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PHOTOGRAPHS: STEFAN RUIZ (3), FIGURINES ARE THE CREATION OF MEDELLÍN ARTIST ESTEBAN ZAPATA

refugees: Medellín Without Slums. The new residents insisted on naming it after him.

Barrio Pablo Escobar today remains a defiant presence, a name city leaders still refuse to acknowledge even as its population has swelled past 16,000. Other marginalized neighborhoods have received infusions of creative investment-an aerial tram, a 1,260-foot outdoor escalator-which helped Medellín earn a worldwide Innovative City of the Year award. Not Barrio Pablo Escobar, The neighborhood council president, Wberny Zabala, recalls a former Medellín mayor hinting that a name change could beget civic improvements. That inspired Zabala to spraypaint a giant welcome to barrio pablo ESCOBAR mural. "You don't sell loyalty," he tells me, as I struggle to keep pace on the vertiginous paths.

If there were money, Zabala would commission a bronze statue, to ensure that time never erases the community's origins. As it is, a different kind of artistic endeavor has already entered neighborhood lore. A young Medellín art student, Esteban Zapata, won a grant a few years back to craft a series of Pablo figurines, each with a distinct identity: commando, rapper, politician, and so on. "It seemed to me that the image of Pablo Escobar was in transition," says Zapata, removing each model from bubble wrap with white cotton gloves. "My little strategy was to see how can I verify if the image of Pablo Escobar has the potential to be a saint."

The pieces, cast in fiberglass, stand nine inches tall, the feet anchored on tiny pedestals. They all have a similarly pale, expressionless face, most with the same dapper mustache, yet no matter the guise, each is unmistakably him. The statuettes landed Zapata in Medellín's most important museum, but he was determined to investigate their "social uses," to put them in people's hands. So he brought plaster versions to Barrio Pablo Escobar. Convening a group of old-timers, Zapata asked his hosts to choose whichever model spoke to them. When he returned a week later, Zapata discovered that his art had ascended to iconography: Colombia's most vilified citizen was standing sentry over altars and shrines, occupying the same venerated space as baby Jesuses and virgin mothers.

While hiking Barrio Pablo Escobar's labvrinth of staircases and switchbacks, past corrugated tin roofs tamped down by bricks and drainage spouts doubling as clotheslines, I wind up in the tidy living room of Lus Mere Valencia, a 59-year-old health care worker who had selected a Robin Hood figurine (Pablo in green tunic and red tights)—and there it still is, on her hutch, alongside a heart-shaped Mickey Mouse platter and a ceramic Santa Claus.

Was He Robin Hood? Or Just a Hood?

Pablo Escobar played many contradictory roles in Colombian life. So Medellín artist Esteban Zapata cast figurines of the kingpin's multiple personalities, letting Colombians choose how to remember him



The Politician

Seeking respectability for his smuggling operation, Pablo briefly entered politics, winning election to congress. The position came with a convenient perk: judicial immunity.

The Benefactor

Although Pablo didn't just steal from the rich—he kidnapped and assassinated, too—he did give to the poor. In Medellín's slums, his Robin Hood-ish philanthropy still dwarfs his crimes.

The Commoner

A child of rural poverty, without a formal education, Pablo embodied the dreams of the frustrated laboring classes—with illicit billions to threaten Colombia's oligarchy.—J.K.

"He did for us what no government ever did," says Valencia, recounting her escape from the filth and humiliation of the rubbish heap. Pablo's munificence was so transformative, it has allowed her to overlook his nefarious deeds, even to deny the fact of his mortality. "We still have that illusion in our hearts that our benefactor is alive, an illusion that's still not extinguished," she says. "No, no, no, no, no, it's not. Ha! Maybe that's not logical, but for us it is."

At the height of the manhunt, as his circle of bodyguards collapsed, Pablo was often forced to live as a refugee himself. Sometimes he retreated to the jungle, trudging through the peat, drinking from lakes. Other times he would surface in the city, bloated and bedraggled, his untamed appearance allowing him to hide in plain sight. That is how Valencia remembers him-"a beggar at the door, dressed in rags like us"-the tragic, haunted Pablo. In her telling, she would offer him an arepa, the cornmeal fritter that has nourished Colombian souls longer than there has been a Colombia, and then her visitor would disappear into the night.

AS DARKNESS SETTLES on Hacienda Nápoles, I return for an after-hours peek, circling the perimeter as the sky blinks with lightning and fireflies dance through the brush. Rather than fortifying the fence

that encloses Hippo Lake, the theme park has rigged segments to swing open like pet doors: Safely on view by day, the hippos decamp every night to forage and graze.

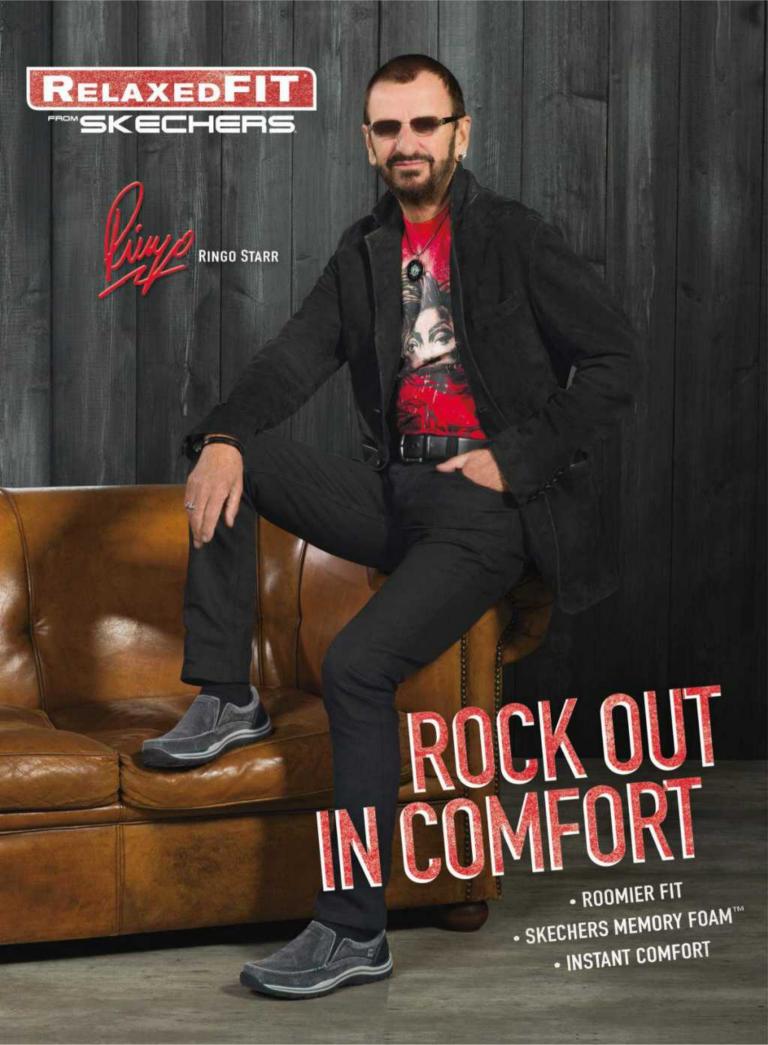
Colombia's hippo population has been doubling every five years. A hippo's life $span\ is\ typically\ fifty\ years.\ "This\ is\ very$ basic math," says the veterinarian driving our snorkel-equipped pickup, Carlos Valderrama, who advised Colombian authorities during the hunt for Pepe but eventually soured on the politics. "What's going to happen when we have 10,000 hippos in the Río Magdalena?"

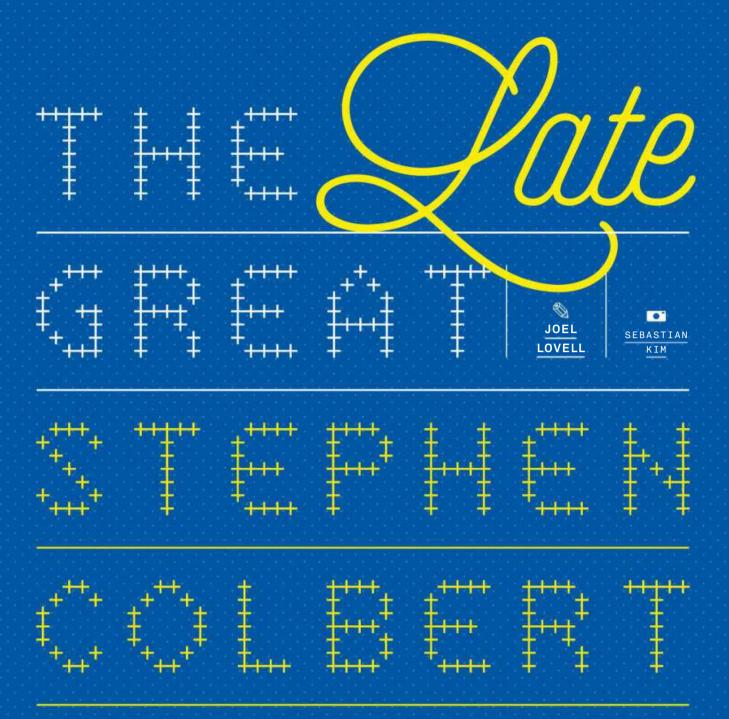
We lurch up knolls and barrel down ravines, our high beams catching the glint of distant eyeballs: a fox, an alligator.

"There, see that black shadow?" Valderrama hollers, aiming the truck at an ungainly figure. In the headlights it looks bulbous and shimmery, like a pearl, with legs too stubby for land. On the fringes of Pablo Escobar's former hideaway I am staring at the most dangerous mammal on earth, a beast in the liminal space between captivity and freedom.

We leap out and scramble, angling for a closer look. But by the time our eyes have adjusted, the hippo has vanished.

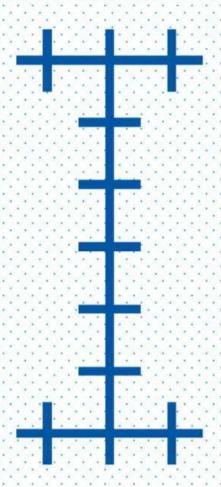
JESSE KATZ is a Los Angeles writer and the author of a memoir, The Opposite Field. This is his first article for GQ.





Since last winter, after laying to rest the blowhard host of The Colbert Report and inheriting Letterman's seat on THE LATE SHOW, the most inventive comic of his generation has been consumed with one very large question: Who will he be now? Here, Stephen Colbert—the real one—gives a sneak peek. And in revealing his truest self (and boy, does he go deep), he shows us how he might just reinvent late-night, too





IT WAS EARLY JULY, about nine weeks before the debut of *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*, and we were sitting in his temporary office above a BMW dealership on the far west side of Manhattan. He looked very tired, and he was apologizing (unnecessarily) for rambling on in a way that was maybe a little uncomfortably overemotional. "I didn't leave the studio until 2 a.m. last night," he said. "Didn't get to bed until three, and I've been traveling and just got here—."

He'd been up late doing a strange stunt the night before, stepping in unannounced as host of *Only in Monroe*, a local public-access program in Monroe, Michigan, about forty miles south of Detroit. There was all sorts of pressure on their first show, he said. "First show! First show! Well, fuck the first show. There's going to be 202 this year—how do you do a first one? So I just wanted to go do a show someplace. And now we've done it."

The idea was to do *Only in Monroe* more or less as it always is—same production values, same set and graphics and crew—just a ton of jokes. His first guests were the show's regular hosts, Michelle Bowman and (former Miss America) Kaye Lani Rae Rafko Wilson. (Colbert on-air: "I'm not sure how many people that is.") He did Monroe news and the Monroe calendar, and about twenty minutes in, he brought out his next guest, "a local Michigander who is making a name for himself in the competitive world of music, Marshall Mathers."

We were talking about the logistics involved in pulling off something like this, and how great it felt for him to be improvising in front of a camera again, and the curious tensions that popped up in his interview with Eminem. And then we got onto the subject of discomfort and disorientation, and the urge he has to seek out those feelings, and from there it was a quick jump

to the nature of suffering. Before long we were sitting there with a plate of roast chicken and several bottles of Cholula on the table between us, both of us rubbing tears from our eyes. "The level of emotion you're getting from me right now—I'm not saying it's dishonest," he said. "I'm just saying it's not normal. I'd really love to go to bed. I promise you, I do not spend my time on the edge of tears."

I've easily played the recording of that conversation a dozen times, only one of them in order to transcribe. And while we spent plenty of time talking about comedy and the conventions of late-night and the sheer logistical challenge of doing a show twice as long as his old one—the thing I've been thinking about the most since my time with Colbert is loss. The losses he's experienced in his life, yes, but really the meaning we all make of our losses. Deaths of loved ones, the phases of our children's lives hurtling by, jobs and relationships we never imagined would end. All of it. In some way, our lives are compendiums of loss and change and what we make of it. I've never met anyone who's faced that reality more meaningfully than Stephen Colbert. I suppose, more than anything, that's what this story is about.

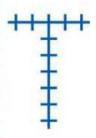
Also: ball jokes. Or the abscence of them. They're doing network now, after all, and Colbert has declared a moratorium on ball jokes. (I believe I was present for the last one. It involved Greece and the Eurozone—and Paul Krugman's balls.)

They did the public-access show live at midnight, with no advance publicity and no Twitter or Facebook posts afterward. The only way the world would ever know that it happened is if someone, an insomniac or an inmate or one of the show's twelve viewers, looked up at the screen at some point and recognized Colbert hanging out with Eminem next to the potted plant. Maybe that person would tell somebody, and maybe that other person would tweet about it.

"I have to check right now to see how many people have seen this fucker," Colbert said. "When we showed it at midnight, nobody watched it. I mean nobody.... We dug a hole in the backyard, yelled a show into it, then covered it up with dirt and said, 'Don't tell anybody."

Someone must have spotted him on the show's morning rerun, because Twitter was beginning to light up in confusion and amazement. "YouTube has frozen the count," he said. "They usually do that when people are hitting it so fast they go, 'Wait, this might be bots.' "He seemed really pleased with how this experiment in pure virality was playing out. "We worked really hard for no one to know it was happening," he said, "to see if anybody would know that it was happening."





THE QUESTION THAT has been hanging over the entire *Late Show* staff since last December, when Colbert put to rest the righteous blowhard he'd played for the past nine years, was: Who will he be now that he's no longer in character? How will his style change—and his opinions be expressed—if he's not delivering his jokes through

an imbecile's mouth? When you're speaking to a huge swath of America each night, can you still carry a knife?

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The Tie Bar

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It's interesting to watch his interview with Eminem with this in mind. The whole thing is great, but there are a few spots that are electric, because we assume that Eminem is in on the conceit—that Colbert is playing a character who is aggressively ignorant of who he is-and vet he appears in these moments to be totally baffled by what's going on. "I'm so confused right now," Eminem says at one point. "I'm trying to figure out if you're serious." Colbert remains stubbornly, insultingly in character. "I'd like to apologize," he says, "if you're a bigger deal than I know about." Eminem stares back at him in disbelief. "Are you serious right now?" he says again. "I'm trying to figure out if you're serious right now." Colbert straightens in his chair. "You seem pretty mad," he says. And it's true, he does! If Eminem's reaction were purely a performance, there would be a very different energy there. We'd just be watching two guys play makebelieve. But something else is going on. It's so subtle and (I imagine) unintentional, but in his sly execution of the conceit, Colbert is pushing them toward something more real than if he'd played it straight-difficult questions of ego and fame.

"I don't know what parts of the interview he, like, truly doesn't know what the fuck's going on," Colbert said. "But yeah, I think there were times when he was genuinely confused."

Shedding the suit of the high-status dummy he played for nine years has liberated him to do the comedy he really wants to do, he said. Whatever comes next—however he shape-shifts between being recognizably himself and playing a veiled or not-so-thinly-veiled character—the motivation will be all his. "I just want to do things that scratch an itch for me. That itch is often something that feels *wrong*. It's wrong because it breaks convention or is unexpected or at times uncomfortable. I *like* that feeling."

The old character was "a continual style joke," he said, and that style, punditry, had been a reaction to a time when O'Reilly and Limbaugh and the rest of the shouters exerted a real gravitational pull on the American psyche. For however often Jon Stewart and Colbert dismissed the notion that they had any mission beyond the (very difficult) one of telling great jokes, they had become a portal through which viewers made sense of American insanity. Their shows served as dense clouds of satirical antimatter.

And then things changed, slowly. America is different now. There will never be a shortage of daily atrocities to be satirized, but Colbert began to strain against the limitations of the character he played—"to have to pull everything through the keyhole of his worldview." Even before CBS offered him the *Late Show* gig, he had decided to shut *The Colbert Report* down.

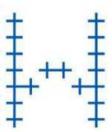
"I no longer felt that that model served to address the national mood," he said. Ten years ago, the country was palpably more afraid and angry. "We're in a different place now." Gay marriage. The reasonable and occasionally unifying course of the Obama administration. "We can stop freaking out that the guy's middle name is Hussein," he said. "What else? Our response to the horror in South Carolina is to take the flag down. That is something I didn't think was ever going to happen."

Publishing bylaws practically require a comparison at this point between the styles of Jimmy and Conan and James and Jimmy and Seth and Carson and now Colbert. But it feels silly to think about him in those terms. He's so unlike anyone else on television, or even anyone in TV memory, that the real question becomes what kind of public figure will emerge over time, and how much influence he'll have beyond the nightly delivery of great jokes (again, so hard to do that!).

When I raised the idea that he was one of the country's few public moral intellectuals, and that there were plenty of people out there wondering how that role might express itself in the new show, he said, "I have a morality. I don't know if it's the best morality. And I do like thinking. If people perceive that as a moral intellectualism, that's fine. That's up to them to decide. A friend of mine once said, 'If someone says you're influencing them, then you're influential. It's not up for you to say. You can't take that away from them.' But it's entirely not my intention. This I promise you. Because that's a short road to being a comedian in all seriousness. 'As a comedian, in all seriousness, let me not entertain you.'"

Three days after the massacre in Charleston, Colbert returned to his hometown to lay flowers at the steps of Emanuel AME and join the peace march across the Arthur Ravenel Jr. Bridge. He described it as the most moving and affirming gathering he'd ever witnessed. I know I wasn't alone, though, in wishing he had been on the air—and not because the country needed a laugh, obviously. What the country needed was a model for how to see and think and be. Jon Stewart went a long way toward providing that, with his *I have no jokes* opening monologue and his quiet, contained-rage attack on political opportunism. But the voice I selfishly longed for was Colbert's.

"We would have done it, if we had to," he said when I asked if any part of him had felt a desire to talk about it on the air. "But no," he said. "It's such an old form of a particular evil. Such a pure form, that it feels very old. It was like a dragon showed up. Like, yeah, there used to be dragons. I didn't know there still were dragons... and I don't necessarily crave facing that dragon with my little sword." He paused for a moment and looked down at the table. "Tragedy is sacred," he said. "People's suffering is sacred."



WE TOOK A RIDE one day from the temporary offices over to the completely gutted Ed Sullivan Theater. Along the way, Colbert talked about watching that week's episode of *The Bachelorette* with his family. His wife and daughter were sitting on the sofa wearing facial masks, and

he decided to join them, he said, because the woman who does his makeup told him he had to get better at moisturizing. "I have a face like a catcher's mitt." He went into the bathroom and dug through a pile of products and found one that, after you smear it on, congeals over your face in a thick golden gel. He pulled up a picture of him and his son both wearing it. "You know what it looks like?" he said. He thumbed in a search on his phone. "Here. Look at this. The Death Mask of Agamemnon."

Inside there were scaffolds everywhere, including one in the middle of the floor that rose to the top of the



theater's dome, which had been blocked for decades by air ducts and sound buffers and was now being fully restored. There's a massive wooden chandelier up there that predates Ed Sullivan and has individual stained-glass chambers that house its bulbs. We climbed to the top, and after running a few questions by the guys working up there (turns out that whoever's job it was to change the bulbs all those years ago used to stub out his cigars and leave them in the chandelier), Colbert wandered over to the edge of the scaffolding to look at the scene depicted in the arched stained-glass windows that had also been revealed. "Look at that lute player," he said, and then he gave a quick little off-the-cuff lecture on Venetian-Moorish design.

The micro level at which he is involved in every aspect of preparations is bewildering. He moved so quickly throughout the theater, followed by a small phalanx of architects and designers and contractors. He climbed small hidden ladders in the wings to stand on exposed beams and demonstrate how he needed sneak doors to swing. He headed down below stage level, into what will be either a writers' room or a greenroom, to propose how an air-conditioning duct be rerouted. In every moment of every conversation, his focus on the person in front of him and the logistical conundrum at hand was complete. He never showed frustration, never seemed overwhelmed by the sheer volume of stuff coming at him. If you didn't know he

6. A Plaid Suit Is the Stylish Man's Secret Weapon

Doesn't matter if you're 25 or 65-your suit arsenal's not complete without plaid. [Wear it with a turtleneck and loafers for bonus points.]



suit \$2,525 **Canali**

turtleneck \$295 **Pal Zileri**

loafers \$570 Church's

pocket square
The Tie Bar

where to buy it? go to gq.com/go /fashiondirectories was the talent and came upon that scene with a van full of HVAC parts, you'd definitely be like, Oh, that's the guy I need to ask where to install these.

There were so many details to consider. The arc of the stage and the exact angle of his desk and if Jon Batiste's band should be on one level or two. (Jon wants to be able to look into the eyes of the drummer, which makes sense, but there were other aesthetic and practical concerns to weigh, too.) Would the panels behind his desk be just one shade of cobalt, or could they get a range of cobalts? What about the bulbs? Does it need to be LED, or can we use strips of good old GE bulbs?

Back at his office, Colbert delivered a soliloquy on the necessity of focus and intention, being fully present for whatever moment you are in. He was talking about comedy, and how to make a TV show 200 times a year, but it also felt like a text lifted from the Buddha's sutras. The final goal, the product, is beside the point. "The end product is jokes, but you could easily say the end product is intention. Having intentionality at all times... The process of process is process."

And then he talked about the Food Network show *Chopped.* The reason he loves *Chopped* is that it's a show that is wholly about process, about creation within a limited range of possibilities. "This show," he said, meaning The Late Show, "is Chopped, Late-night shows are Chopped. Who are your guests tonight? Your guests tonight are veal tongue, coffee grounds, and gummy bears. There, make a show.... Make an appetizer that appeals to millions of people. That's what I like. How could you possibly do it? Oh, you bring in your own flavors. Your own house band is another flavor. You have your own flavor. The audience itself is a base dish, like a rice pilaf or something. And then together it's 'Oh shit, that's an actual meal.' And that's what every day is like at one of these shows. Something is one thing in the morning, and then by the end of the day it's a totally different thing. It's all process."

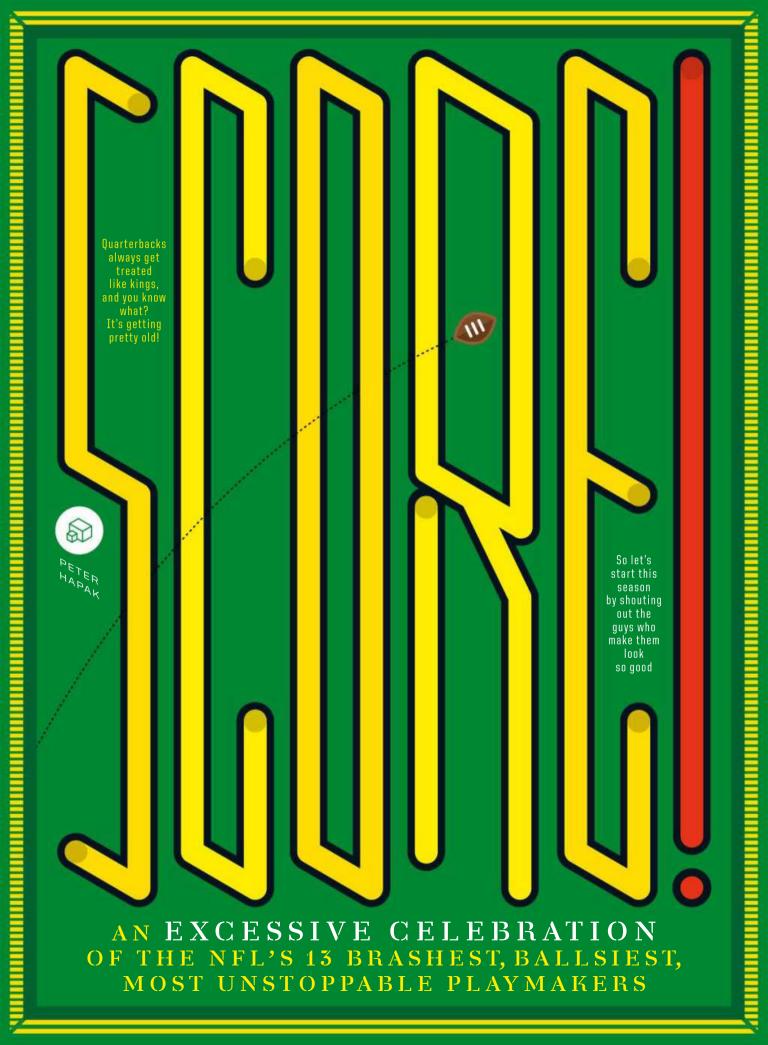
Earlier that day the world went haywire for a few hours. The New York Stock Exchange went offline, and at that point nobody knew why. Stocks in China were cratering. United Airlines grounded hundreds of flights because of computer glitches. In a morning pitch meeting, one of the show's writers got a news alert, and they decided to try to put together a video to be released online later that day. They'd been doing this once or twice a week, as a way of keeping the tools sharp and their audience engaged.

Early afternoon, a handful of writers and producers filed into Colbert's office and passed the script around. The gist was that technology had failed us, and Colbert, possibly the last celebrity alive, had barricaded himself in a room with piles of office supplies and snack foods and a chicken with which he would procreate and start civilization anew. He started reading the script in character, rewriting bits on the fly, and those updates were typed into an updated script that would be loaded into a monitor for the shoot.

They finished the script, and he headed off to check out the set, which had been thrown together in a small, windowless room—"the bad room," they call it—that some writers normally work in. The desk in the bad room was now covered with piles of papers and snacks and a jug labeled URINE. There was a tire and a thick rope and a mound of those little coffee K-Cups in assorted flavors.

A woman carrying the chicken arrived and stood in the hall outside the bad room. "They only gave me a half hour's notice," she told me, and then described how she had to drive several miles to her farm in Jersey to find the one she'd recently used in an episode of *Orange Is the New Black*.

Colbert appeared from makeup and said, "Hi, great to see you again. Come on in," and led her into the bad room, where they cleared a spot for her and the chicken beneath the desk. The whole shoot took about twenty minutes and ended with the chicken flying out of his arms ("She's scrappy!") and then Colbert realizing that the one thing he *(continued on page 249)*







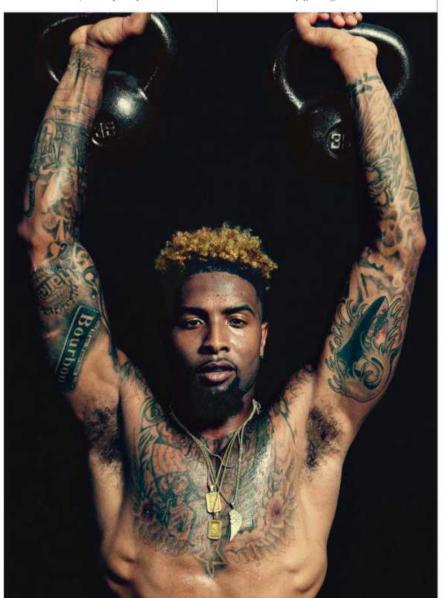
ODELL BECKHAM^{JR}

"IT WAS THE ONLY WAY I FELT

like I could've caught the ball," Odell Beckham Jr. says, as if it had been an act of desperation, as if he'd already tried everything and had no other choice. "So I just reached back and caught it." This is a marvelously dull way to describe The Catch, the highlight of the 2014-15 NFL season, so here's a more vivid recap: The Giants rookie receiver—playing in just his seventh pro game—leapt into the air, hung there for an hour or two, reached behind his head, and grabbed the ball with one hand-three fingers, really—then tumbled into the end zone. Announcer Cris Collinsworth (himself a former pro receiver) called it one of the greatest catches he'd ever seen. The Internet melted, OBJ's jersey rocketed to

the top-seller slot, and his face landed on the cover of Madden NFL 16.

But for Beckham, it was just one more one-handed grab in a lifelong continuum of one-handed grabs. He says he's been practicing them since he got to college at LSU, along with his roommate (and fellow wideout) Jarvis Landry. "We'd just throw it at each other as hard as we could," Beckham says, "and try to make some ridiculous catches." To this day, he practices them while he's warming up before games, while he's sitting down, and while he's doing handstands, which doesn't even sound possible. Since the play happened, he's practiced them on Instagram, in video clips scored to Drake. "Raise the standard of catching," Landry used to urge him. Beckham's only getting started.-SAM SCHUBE





JIMMY GRAHAM



To: Roger Goodell From: GQ Re: End Zone Celebrations

Rog. Listen. You need some good news. You need viral videns that don't result in iail time. And in the person of our man Jimmy here welcome to Seattle, BTW!we have what we call a metaphor. Liberate him and his goalpost spike! Liberate all celebrations! Just this once. leave the policing to the players.





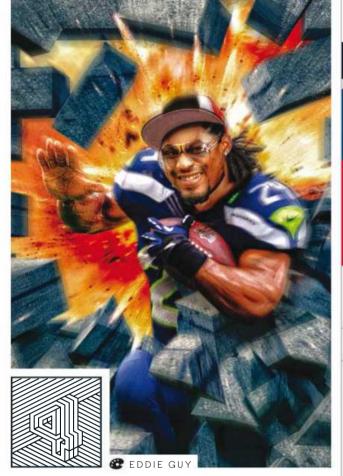
THE MOST

shocking moment of the NFL off-season came in March, when Eagles coach Chip Kelly traded his star running back, LeSean McCoythe ghost-levelelusive, opponentclowning heir to Barry Sanders to the Bills for no apparent reason. "That was crazy," McCoy says, still a bit woundedsounding. "I felt like I'd always be there." Instead, McCoy finds himself in Buffalo. "I just gotta get used to it."

It's been easier getting used to his new coach, Rex Ryan, the players'-coach antidote to Kelly's authoritarian regime. Unlike Chip, McCoy says, Rex "lets you be a man. He won't say, 'Be in bed at ten o'clock,' or check your sleep. He's just like: Be professionals."

So now, while McCov waits for revenge-Bills vs. Eagles, December 13!—his old team has already moved on, replacing him with ex-Cowbov DeMarco Murray. "I think Murray's good," McCoy says. "But I don't see him as competition as far as the best backs. I like my game a lot." -ZACH BARON





MARSHAWN LYNCH

THERE ARE LOADS OF

reasons to love Marshawn Lynch, and most of them are stupid—his haircut, his propensity for grabbing his junk, a strident unwillingness to talk to broadcasters who aren't named Conan, and his obsession with game-time Skittles consumption (which, I cannot deny, is pretty lovable). Everything about his persona screams "media gimmick," or at least "media weirdo." If you've never watched him play, you'd never take him seriously. But anyone who has takes him as seriously as lung cancer, and that's what makes him exhilarating: Beneath that superficial swagger lies the most violent running back since Earl Campbell.

Pro football has a problem, and everybody knows what it is: They have to convince the world that a sport based on collisions is (somehow) not inherently dangerous. The NFL will change its rules to amplify everything that features finesse; ten years from now, football will barely resemble the sport it was

ten years ago. Yet watching Lynch carry the ball reminds us that this is still a game built-for better or worse-on unadulterated physicality. Lynch is a complicated man, but his greatness is simple: He hits opponents harder than they hit him.

The list of non-quarterbacks who can single-handedly dominate a game is exceedingly short. Lynch's name rests at the very top of that minuscule list. In the first half of games, he averages 4.0 yards a carry. That's not bad. In the second half of games, he averages 5.3. That's the difference between Seattle and everybody else. Lynch wears people down. He makes them want to quit. His nickname is Beast Mode, and sometimes that feels awkward: It's a little strange to designate a grown man as a non-human, and it gives ammunition to all those who think football is immoral. But has any nickname ever been more apt? When it's third-andthree, Marshawn Lynch is not a human. He's something way, way better.-chuck klosterman

5-8 the fantastic four

THE NFL LOVES ITS "SHUTDOWN CORNERS," BUT GOD STILL HASN'T MADE A CORNERBACK SUPERHUMAN ENOUGH TO SHUT DOWN THESE GENETIC FREAKS



DEZ BRYANT

Makes evervone nervous, even his



JULIO JONES

ATLANTA FALCONS



DEMARYIUS THOMAS

DENVER BRONCOS

6'3", 229 LBS.

Still hasn't Was hard to stop peaked because even before Peyton of injuries. was his OB.



ALSHON JEFFERY

CHICAGO BEARS

Just 25, he's the future of the Bears' offense.

JORDY NELSON

LAST YEAR. THE PACKERS STAR CAUGHT SEVEN-BY HIMSELF





80 yards Burned one Jet for the catch, made another fall down in pursuit. This score



won the game.

73 yards

How does he feel after loooong catch-and-sprints into the end zone? "Kind of tired."



10/2/14 VS. VIKINGS 66 yards

Nelson says these routes take "a lot of practice, a lot of trust" with QB Aaron Rodgers.



40 yards

This one came just two minutes and forty seconds later and iced the game for Green Bay.



10/19/14 VS. PANTHERS 59 yards

Nelson drew man coverage, so he beelined for the end zone; Rodgers hit him in stride



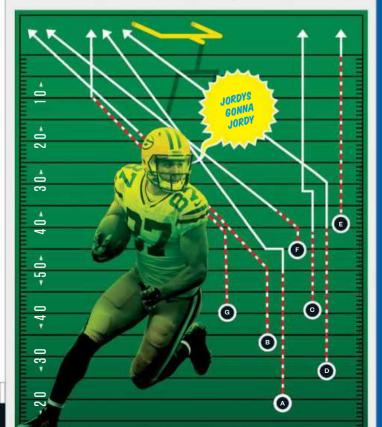
11/30/14 VS. PATRIOTS 45 yards

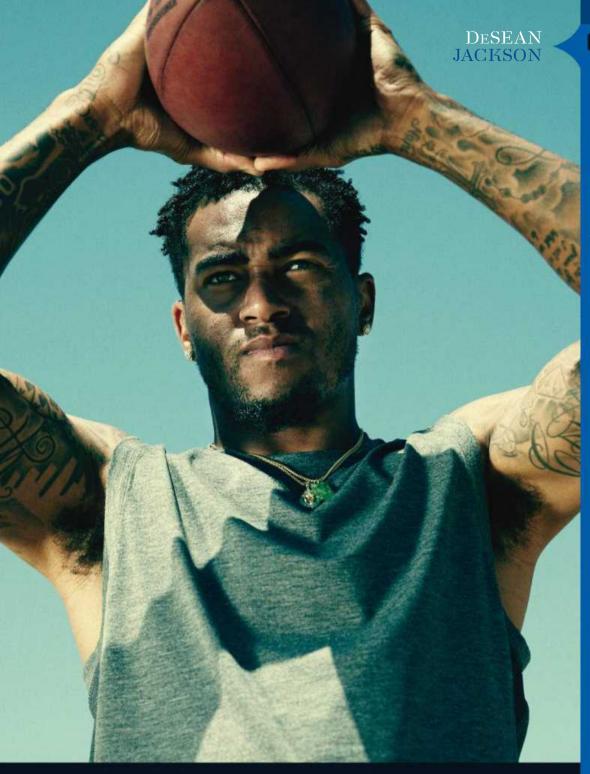
Roasted the Super Bowl champsand G.O.A.T. corner Darrelle Revis-for this long score.





60 yards "If [Rodgers] trusts me to be on the same page, we'll make plays." He does, and they do.





TTAW LL

It turns out that the colossal Houston Texans quarterback-eater is a scoring threat, too. Last season, Watt recorded 20.5 sacks doing his day job, but he also moonlighted as a receiver and caught three passes—for three touchdowns. (He also scored twice on defense, for a total of five—the same number as LeSean McCoy.) Will we see him back on offense this year? "You're going to have to tune in to find out," he says. "I sure hope so."—CLAY SKIPPER



DESEAN JACKSON,

scorned former
Eagle, currently the
most exciting and
mercurial player on
a Washington team
that has not otherwise
been very exciting
lately, will answer
the question, just as
soon as he can figure
out how:

Do you feel like you guys will contend this year?

Long silence. "Uh... how 'bout I say, uh... Let me see what I can answer to that question..."

So, okay, yesthe beleaguered Washington franchise with a name we can't even bring ourselves to say in 2015 ("It's a touchy subject," DeSean admits) will probably stav beleaguered well into 2016. But at least they have Jacksonan otherworldly receiver whose small frame belies the havoc he causes every week.

Meanwhile Jackson spent his spring shooting a reality show for BET. He says that after Philly released him in 2014, he wanted to strike back. "The Eagles portrayed me to be this crazy young thug guy," Jackson says. "But as far as me being a respectful guy and doing what's right instead of wrong— I've always felt I've been on that right path." One that probably won't end in the playoffs, sure. But the end zone will do for now.-z.b.





SPORTSWRITERS

love to describe Julian Edelman as scrappy. What they mean is he's tough, white, and bearded—all of which are true. But it ignores the fact that the Patriots wideout is also really, really fast. And since February 1, when he caught the Super Bowl—

clinching touchdown pass, he's been moving at warp speed, even for him.

It began seconds after the final gun: He did the whole *I'm going to Disneyland* post-game commercial shoot, and then a few sleepless, debaucherous hours later...he had to go to Disneyland. Turns out

that "you have to go immediately, the next morning, and have the parade there and bring your whole family."

The rest of Edelman's whirlwind off-season was less wholesome: free beers at every bar in Boston, reported parties at Harvard. And then, cherry on top, a

Fourth of July for the ages. His Super Bowl ring somehow found its way in between a pair of very large, very bikinied breasts—and then onto Instagram. So Julian, who had the better off-season: you or your ring? "Well," he says, "we both work hard. That's all that really matters."—s.s.





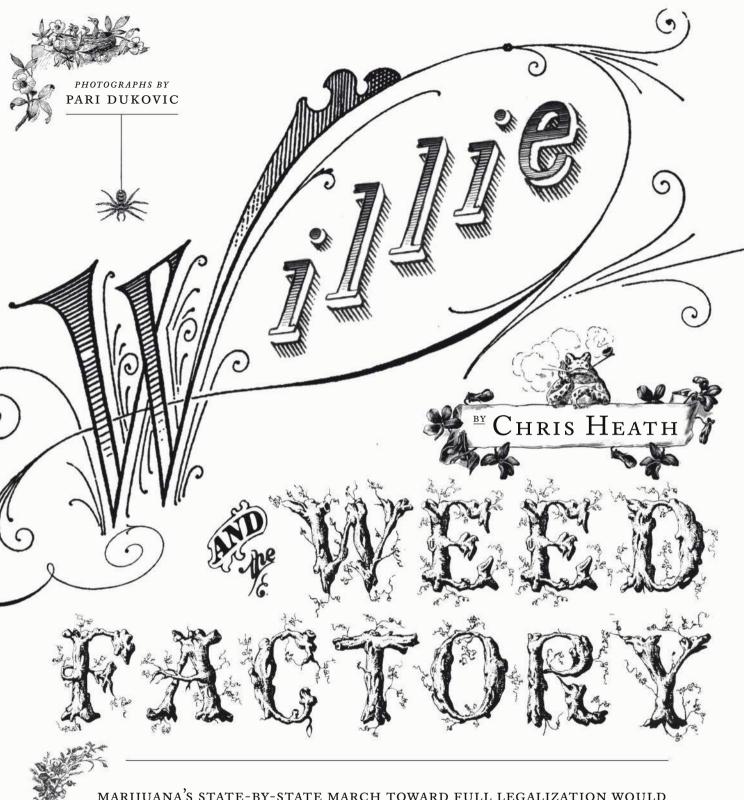












marijuana's state-by-state march toward full legalization would never have happened without willie nelson. He's 82 now, and he's spent nearly half his life as *America's most famous stoner*. But this fall he'll be making the leap from aficionado to entrepreneur. What Paul Newman did for tomato sauce, what Francis Coppola did

for Cabernet, Willie Nelson is hoping to do for weed







"I'VE BOUGHT A LOT OF POT IN MY LIFE,"
Willie Nelson tells me, "and now
I'm selling it back."



Willie Nelson has this kind of answer—stock, pithy—for all kinds of questions, and he's been using them for decades. Bring up his brief abortive stint at college studying business administration? Invariably he'll soon say, "I majored in dominoes." Mention the massive sum he owed the IRS in the early '90s—somewhere between \$17 million and \$32 million—and you'll get the one about how it isn't so much "if you say it real fast."

As time passes, the world offers up new questions, and so sometimes new answers are required. Once he reached the age when people began asking about retirement, Nelson would reply that he doesn't do anything but play music and golf: "I wouldn't know what to quit." And now that one of America's stoner icons is going into the pot business and planning to launch his own proprietary brand called Willie's Reserve, this bought-a-lot-of-pot-in-my-life line is already on instant replay and you can confidently expect to hear Nelson use it for the next few years, anytime the subject is raised in his vicinity. In fact when we first meet, on the tour bus where he likes to do interviews and live much of his life, less than ninety seconds pass before he deploys it.

There's a lot of shade and space behind answers like these. They leave people feeling like they've had a funny and intimate encounter with someone who, as Willie Nelson does, knows how to deliver them—with an amiable mischievous half-smile and a wizened wink in his eye, as though the words have just popped into his head. Answers that charm and entertain but also leave his real thoughts unbothered, his real life unruffled.

Willie Nelson has plenty of real thoughts, and he has lived a life as real and unreal as they come for eighty-two years and counting. Those stories are a little harder to shake loose, but he will share some of them, too. And when it comes to Willie Nelson, it's worth holding out for the good stuff.

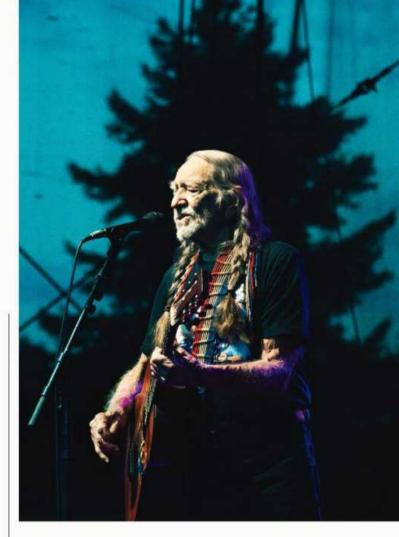


Maube all of us are engaged in a lifelong fight to

find our better natures. But some of us, perhaps the luckiest ones, find a reliable shortcut. For Willie Nelson, that shortcut has turned out to be pot. It works for him, and he needed it. His public image is a kind of Zen cowboy, a naturally chilled-out elder—Robin Williams used to have a bit in his act about how even Buddha was jealous of how mellow Willie Nelson was—but of course the truth is more complicated. "I can be a real asshole when I'm straight," he tells me. "As Annie can probably adhere to."

Annie is Nelson's fourth wife—"my current wife," as he has sometimes described her, though they have now been married for twenty-four years. She sits out of my sight, behind me, but periodically she contributes to the conversation. "He's not an asshole sober," she clarifies, coming to her husband's defense. Briefly, at least. "Only when he's drinking. Then he's an asshole."

Did you think you were an asshole at the time?



"Oh, I've always known that possibility, you know," he says. "I saw a funny cartoon the other day. 'How do you piss off a redhead?' 'Say something.'"

And you felt like some anger came with your red hair?

"I could associate with the temper that goes with it."

So are you still as angry as you used to be, but now that you smoke you've just learned how to not show it?

"Probably. I still get pissed off, and take a couple of hits and say, 'Well, it ain't that bad...' Delete and fast-forward: That's my new motto."

"It works," Annie attests.

How long's that been the motto?

"Oh, six months," he says.

What kind of things can annoy you?

"Life itself, you know. If you start going over the way things are and you don't get pissed off, you just haven't studied the facts yet." He laughs.

So, overall, you're proposing that one should study the facts, get pissed off, and then smoke and get un-pissed off?

"Yeah. Delete and fast-forward, start over again. Admit that you're an asshole and move on."

You've said that you're naturally a little too revved up, and that pot brings you back closer to normal.

He nods. "I have compared myself to the motorboat where the fuel for the motorboat is a little too hot for the motor, where you have to add a little oil in it. I figure that's my oil, you know. It's what I have to do to, you know, to make it easier."

And what happens to the motorboat without the oil?

"Burns out," says Annie.

"Yeah. It wears out. And he does dumb and dumber things."

"The motorboat stays a redhead," says Annie.

Do you ever drink at all now?

"Very rarely. If you got a drink, I'll take a drink. But no, I don't like me drinking."



Why do you think it had that effect on you?

"I don't know, I've got a lot of Indian blood in me, and something true is that Indians can't do alcohol. So I start out knowing that. My drummer, Paul, we've been together for a long time, and back in my drinking days whenever I'd get too drunk and out of order, he'd roll up a joint and hand it and I'd take a couple hits and pass out. So he knew how to handle me."

He's said that you always wanted to drive cars when you were drunk.

Nelson's eyes light up. "Yeah. And see how fast they would go." *That's really not a good idea*.

"Thank you." He laughs. "No, you're right."

You crashed a few?

"A couple."

Someone once said—and I think it was you—that it was maybe a hundred.

"Couple. I don't know. Quite a few."

Never got hurt?

"Never got killed. Lucky. Never killed nobody. Lucky. Very, very lucky."

Why do you think you had the impulse to do that?

"I don't know. I was always a kind of go-fast guy, you know."

And what are you now?

"I still am a go-fast guy, but I know that and I try to guard against my instincts a little better."

Does it still come out behind the wheel?

"Well, I have a pickup truck—" he begins.

"Don't get in it," Annie interjects.

"—and I've got a ranch down there with a bunch of roads on it and a lot of cedar trees and it's..." He grins. "I have to take you for a ride in my truck sometime."

"Don't do it," Annie advises. "It's a bad idea."

Do people get scared?

He looks gleeful at the thought. "Hopefully. That's the whole point of it. You take people out and scare the shit out of 'em. It's just fun, you know." He laughs again.

You've got an interesting sense of fun.

"Yeah. You see why I smoke a lot. I've got to calm that out."



When it comes to explaining how Delson is, he'll

often go all the way back to the small Texas town, Abbott, in which he was raised after he and his elder sister, Bobbie, were left by their warring parents to live with their grandparents. It's fair to say that he grew up in a way few people still do.

"You know, all we did in Abbott," he explains, "was fuck, fight, and throw rocks."

Throw rocks?

"That was all we had to do in Abbott," he says.

What would you throw them at?

"Tin cans. Or at each other, you know. We used to have BB-gun fights—we'd put on leather jackets and shoot each other with BB guns. We were kind of bored. We used to go fight bumblebees on Sunday, go home with our eyes swollen shut for being stung. That's young and stupid, but fun."

So: fuck, fight, throw rocks...and fight bees. And right from the start, the young Willie Nelson would also smoke. As the Second World War fomented in Europe, he was already experimenting. "Anything you could roll up," he recalls, "I would try to smoke it. I don't know why." As a kid, he cast the net of the potentially tokable indiscriminately wide. One early mistake was the bark of cedar trees.

"It's a little harsh," he concedes now. "It tastes exactly like it sounds. It's too harsh. And after a couple of drags of it you say, 'Maybe not.'"

So he tried grapevine.

"Not as harsh as the cedar bark," he considers, "but it was harsh."

And then there was the one inadvisable occasion when he tried to smoke some herbal laxatives known as black draughts.

"Bad," he remembers. "Terrible. Not as harsh, but still no good." A momentary grin. "I was regular for a day or two."

Soon he graduated to cigarettes, at first ones he'd scavenge off the floor. An improvement. "I said, 'Well, this is better than cedar bark," he remembers.

Improbably, Nelson believes that he tried pot for the first time when he was 11 or 12, though he didn't realize it until much later on. "I was with a cousin of mine, he was about 15. He had asthma and the doctors gave him a cigarette to smoke. An asthma cigarette. And he offered me a puff off it, and I didn't particularly care for it so I handed it back to him. But years later, when I smoked my first what-I-knew-was-marijuana, I said, 'Wait a minute—I've had this before.' And it took me right back to my cousin with the asthma cigarette."

That seems like weird medicine for asthma—I ask whether it worked for his cousin.

"Yeah," he replies, as though the notion that a joint would be the best medical treatment for asthma were the least unlikely part of the story. "Oh yeah."



When Willie Delson first started touring he used to

stay in hotels, but many years ago he realized that he preferred life here on the bus. Now, even when the bus is parked outside a hotel for the night and everyone else goes in, he stays on board. He has slept on this bus, and on its four predecessors, maybe six months of the year for the past thirty or forty years. "Got everything I need," he says. "Shower, stove, an icebox, a computer, radio, TV. It's been my home for a long time."

He likes being on the bus and he likes being on the move. "Every place gets old after a while," he explains. "I have a nice home in Maui, and even that...you know, I get a little anxious to go away after a while. I just like to travel. That's what I do. I just enjoy moving. It's really hard for me to stay somewhere—I have to get up and go somewhere." He also has a home near Austin, and he even owns a house in Abbott, but he is usually to be found somewhere else. "I've got a lot of Gypsy blood in me, I think," he says.

He's not much fonder of lingering in his own past. When I ruffle one too many uncomfortable memories, he halts me. "Nothing to

Nelson has lived half the year on his tour bus for nearly half his life; the number of joints he's blazed on board is impossible to quantify.



be gained by bringing up all that horseshit again." He gestures to a copy of his latest ghosted autobiography, *It's a Long Story*, which was published earlier this year. "Have you read the book?" he asks.

Of course, I say. (And not just that. The collected Willie Nelson library is quite large—even setting aside the unofficial books, there's also an earlier autobiography, three books of reminiscences and advice and jokes, his ghosted Western novel, and his monograph about the benefits of biodiesel.)

He smiles. "I'll get around to it one day."

You haven't read it?

"It's too big," he says. "Too long. At some point somewhere in the past I remember most of it. But to me it's a funny story."

What do you mean?

"You know, the fact that I'm still here talking to you about it and you give a damn. I'm 82 years old. Lot of people my age are in a home somewhere. So I'm very fortunate, and why I don't know, but I don't question it. I figure this is the way it's supposed to be, and I just enjoy it."



The first time Relson tried pot as an adult, in the

mid-'60s, he was unmoved. He was playing in a band in Fort Worth and the fiddle player offered him a hit. "I didn't like it," he remembers. "Didn't care for it. Of course, I was smoking cigarettes, one after the other. I didn't even get anything—like, puff and puff and nothing and nothing." He'd tell people that pot gave him a headache.

Eventually, as the world knows, he came round. When I ask him what he eventually felt that he hadn't felt before, he deflects. "I have trouble remembering yesterday," he says. (This endlessly adaptable brush-off has been his charming go-to non-answer for years.) I ask whether he doesn't even foggily remember.

"I wasn't enjoying smoking cigarettes," he says. "It's really that simple. I was getting nothing from a cigarette except pneumonia and cancer. And at least from a hit off a joint I got a little brief high off of it." And at this point he chooses to digress, in a way that is both revealing and uncharacteristically immodest. "I have a huge tolerance for pot. I can probably smoke with anybody anywhere. Me and Snoop Dogg had a smoke-off in Amsterdam and he crawled away."

Ah, yes. The legendary First Willie-Snoop Amsterdam Smoke-off. I have listened to a history of this encounter as described by the loser. Snoop Dogg explained how he brought along a blunt only to discover that Nelson already had a joint, a vape pen, and a pipe up and running, and that Nelson simply rotated among all four.

I ask Nelson whether this is true.

"As stupid as it sounds, it's probably true. We had a lot of fun." Do you normally quadruple up like that?

"Oh, I don't have any set of rules that I follow when I'm smoking. If you have one, I'll take a hit."

Is four types at once your maximum?

He looks at me as though for just a moment he thinks I might be bearing a surprise that could enrich his life. "Have you got another one?" he asks. Sadly, I can only disappoint. "I'll try any of them," he says. "Whatever way you can smoke it or take it. I'm for it."

As this story suggests, it turns out that Nelson is still fairly flexible when it comes to his pot consumption. I had read that he had taken up vaping some years ago and had given up smoking to save his lungs. "I smoke a joint whenever I don't care if the smoke is out there," he explains, "but if there's people and I don't want to offend, I'll take a vaporizer."

"And he eats candy or has oil at night for sleeping," Annie clarifies. If Nelson doesn't smoke or get his high somehow, at night there are consequences.

"I start having bad dreams," he says. (He once described the price of abstention like this: "You remember why you started smoking, to stop them crazy fucking dreams. Those crazy dreams that you never really get used to.")



Willie's Reserve is expected to hit stores this fall, though Nelson's own role in the company is more brand ambassador than official bud master.

I ask him what he dreams about, but Annie answers first.

"Intruders, usually," she says.

"A lot of fighting," he elaborates. "Screaming and fighting. I wake up in the middle of the night, scaring the shit out of her."

"It's dangerous to sleep with him when he hasn't smoked," she says.

I ask him whether he has any dreams at all when he does smoke.

"No," he answers. "No."

"Yeah, you do," says Annie.

"I don't have any negative dreams," he clarifies.

"Right," says Annie. "He's usually playing music. He plays music, he plays his guitar. Otherwise he's kicking out and lashing out." And she demonstrates how her husband lies on his back, fingering guitar parts with his hands, playing silent music from somewhere deep within him that no one will ever hear.



Nelson first found success as a songwriter, with

songs like "Night Life," "Funny How Time Slips Away," and, most famously, the one recorded by Patsy Cline, "Crazy." (Legend has it that he wrote these three in one single week in 1959.) Those were just the tip of the iceberg, just three of the dozens of clever, elegant songs he wrote back then, dark lilting country poems suffused with misery and heartache. "I wrote some of the saddest songs in the world," he once said, and it was not an empty claim.

At first he seems to dodge when I mention this. "Well, you know, the old love ballads, first of all people like them, and they seem to be commercial."

But all those songs, I persist, they were pretty heavy in what they described

"Well, yeah," he says. "I was going through all those marriages and divorces."

So, I ask, they came directly from what you were feeling?

"Sure." This reminds him of something. "I won't mention names, but there was one guy who recorded, his manager would tell him horrible things about his wife so that he would feel bad and write another heartbreaker. I thought that was pretty cruel."

Willie didn't need the extra help. But in time he began to think that songs like these created a vortex, a spiral of sorrow from which it was difficult to escape.

"Sometimes I think that's why a lot of those singers out there drink so much," he says. "Because after you go out and sing those same old motherfucking songs every night, it puts them in that bad mood. And a lot of them, they're not a good enough actor to go in there and come out without being affected. So they drink a lot. And that's the beginning of the end, when you start having to drink to go do what you do. I think those old sad songs have a lot to do with it. It makes you want to cry, and then you want to drink, and then you want more sad songs—the one thing calls for the other."

He still sings some of his old ones, of course. "I'm not that highly emotional about anything," he says, "and so I feel like I can deliver the song-the lyric-without getting too involved." He has been singing those three songs I mentioned the same way for over forty years, as a medley, usually quite early in the set. He says that he'll play a couple of new songs at a show like tonight's. (This evening he will sing outdoors in Bend, Oregon, though until he steps out of the bus, he could be anywhere.) "Other than that I'll just kind of coast through the show," he says. It's pretty much the same most nights: Among old Hank Williams covers, gospel songs, and a Django Reinhardt instrumental, there'll be those three songs from the '50s, something with a fuck-you lyric that chugs along from when he grew his hair and became part of the outlaw country movement in the early '70s ("Me and Paul," a travelogue that, among other things, details an early near-drug-bust in Laredo), one of the old-time covers that sent his career to new heights in the late '70s ("Georgia on My Mind"), hits from the pop heyday that followed ("Always on My Mind," "On the Road Again," "Angel Flying Too Close to the Ground"), and maybe the recent pot anthem "Roll Me Up and Smoke Me When I Die" to accompany the new "It's All Going to Pot." Aside from those couple of new songs, very little has changed in the past thirty years, and he sees no reason that it should. "If they show up," he argues, "you're doing it right."

So in some ways a Willie Nelson show is one of the most predictable pieces of mainstream musical theater imaginable. And yet, at

the same time, it is also deeply strange. Nelson's vocal phrasing has always been unusual for country music, sliding over the beat, rushing to and from it in capricious ways, and that tendency has only become more pronounced as time has passed. And his guitar playing is, at times, even more extraordinary—skittering and juddering and lurching, little runs of notes that accelerate, then slow down, like a man speaking a language no one else knows, pacing himself by an erratic metronome. In short bursts, the sound he makes is as close to some kind of Japanese avant-garde art-metal as it is to middle-of-the-road country music. He seems pleased and amused when I touch on this subject, as though it's something he takes private pleasure in. "I like to surprise myself on the guitar," he says.

It's quite a performance. Often, by the way he plays and the way he sings, he can make a song sound as though it's teetering on the brink of collapse—only, of course, that's part of the larger trick, because then you realize that he has created a situation where he is the only person in the world who can, and will, save it.



One Willie Delson weed story is more famous than

all the others, though some key details about it have always remained unclear. It took place during Jimmy Carter's administration.

Famously, you smoked on the roof of the White House.

"I heard that somewhere," he replies.

You're always coy about it. Why?

"Well, I don't know," he says. "I'm trying to find out who that was with me up there. I keep asking people. Wasn't me and you, was it?"

Nelson has told this story in his autobiographies and cagily acknowledged it in endless TV interviews. In his 1988 autobiography he describes being up there "with a beer in one hand and a fat Austin Torpedo in the other," enjoying a view you can get from nowhere else of how Washington's principal streets fan out from the White House. In the 2015 version he describes "a friend of mine who happened to be a White House insider" coming to his bedroom door at the end of the night and offering him a private tour, which took them to the roof:

To top things off, my friend pulled out a joint.

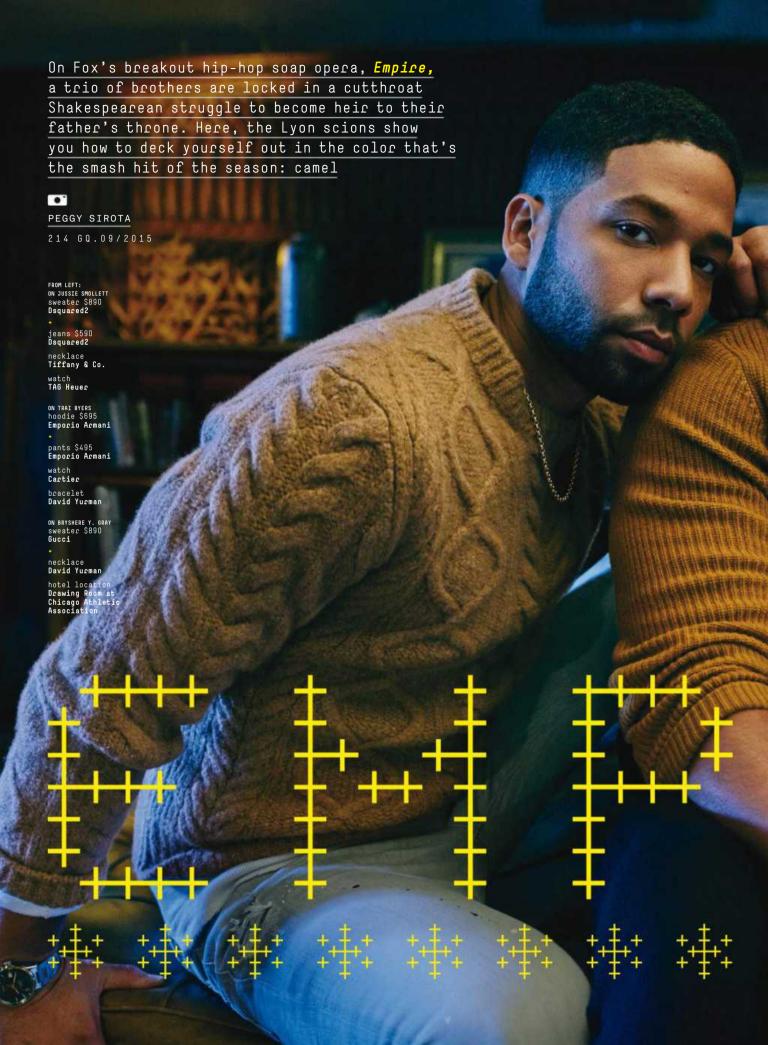
"Think it's time to burn one, Willie, if you don't object."

"Think it's cool?"

"If it wasn't, I wouldn't be offering."

(continued on page 246)









MEET THE SONS OF EMPIRE

Co-created by Lee Daniels the guy behind Precious and The Butler, Empire cracked 20 million viewers for its season one finale. Here we talk to the actors who play Lucious Lyon's rival sons as the much hyped show comes back for season two later this month.—MAGGIE LANGE

BRYSHERE "YAZZ" GRAY WHO HE PLAYS: Hakeem

Lyon, the youngest brother. Skirt-chasing hip-hop scamp.

SIGNATURE LYRIC:
She make that thang go / Drip drop, drip drippity drop.

ON HIS HIT SONG: "It was a TV club-banger that ended up entering the real club. People were like, You're doing TV music, and it's not going to be in the club. How about 'Drip Drop'! I didn't curse once. If you put your mind to it, you ain't gotta curse."

TRAI BYERS

WHO HE PLAYS: Andre
Lyon, the eldest
brother. CFO of Empire
Entertainment.
SIGNATURE LYRIC:
"Those auditors, those
damn auditors, they
can't know it's
from a cash account,"
said rhythmically
in a meeting.
ON THE COMPARISONS
TO SHAKESPEARE: "Every
story is basically
Shakespeare to me. From
a man driving a truck
to a woman walking into
an office: Everything
is Shakespeare."

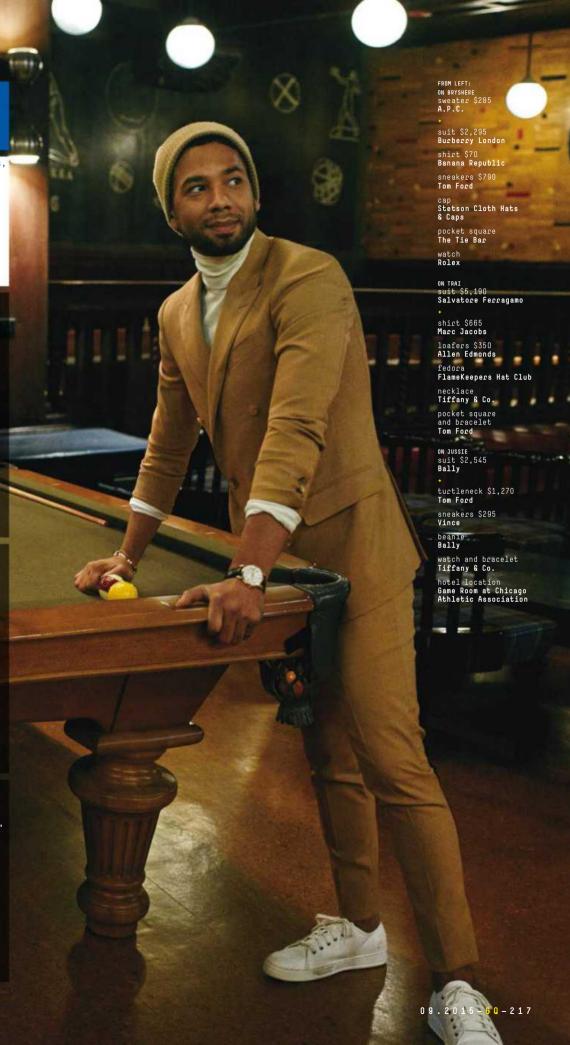
JUSSIE SMOLLETT

WHO HE PLAYS: Jamal Lyon, the middle-est brother. Gay; confessional R&B crooner.

SIGNATURE LYRIC: Can't ask you for a handout, it's time to be a man now / I don't need it, you can keep your money.

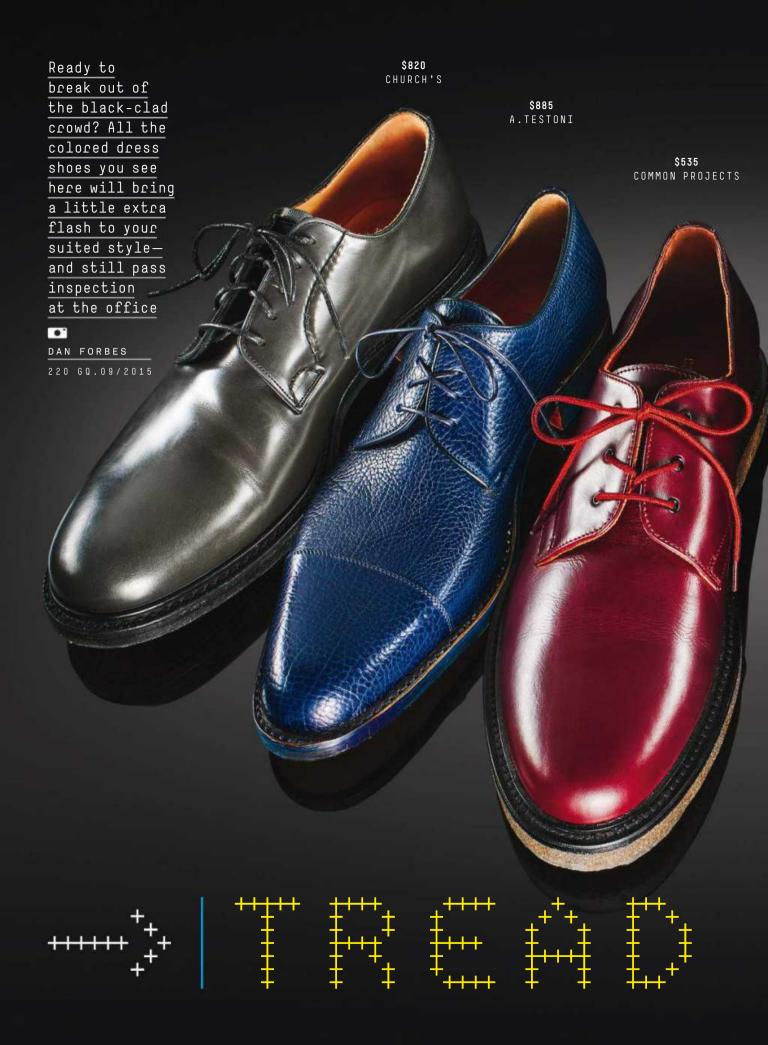
ON JAMAL'S DRIVE:

"That's our job, to be our own worst critic.
I'd rather be my own worst critic.
I'd rather be my own worst critic than have it be someone else."











SEARCHING FOR

DO YOU EVER SEE A SUPER-OLD, SUPER-RICH GUY OUT ON THE TOWN WITH A SUPER-YOUNG GIRL WHO'S SUPER OUT OF HIS LEAGUE AND WONDER, HOW THE HELL DID THAT HAPPEN? THIS IS HOW IT HAPPENED. TAFFY BRODESSERAKNER INVESTIGATES THE BOLD NEW TRANSACTIONAL-LOVE ECONOMY



THURSTON VON MONEYBAGS

Thurston Von Moneybags (not his real name) was scammed once by a girl in Houston. He had arranged to meet her so that he might size her up and determine whether he wanted to give her a monthly stipend in exchange for regular sex and sometimes maybe dinner. In other words: Was there chemistry? Was she blonde and blue-eyed, the way he liked them? Was she thin "but not anorexic, a shapely body, you know?" Could he talk to her? That was very important. It was a little important. It wasn't that important. Anyway, she asked for money up front, and he sent her \$800. She didn't show to the meet, and that's the last time Thurston Von Moneybags ever got hustled again. Now he meets the girls for lunch before he offers them an ahem arrangement, and he is very clear. He doesn't give them money until their second date, when they're in the bedroom, which sometimes feels bad, which sometimes chips away at his this-isn't-prostitution line-Thurston was raised Catholic, after all-but what's the alternative? Getting scammed again? I don't think so. A thing you should know is that there are very few people to root for in this story.

Which is not to say that old Thurston is a bad guy. He went to some of the best colleges and grad schools. He loves to treat a lady well. Just ask his ex-wife-even she wouldn't say a bad word about him. But you know how it is, the fires dampen, and he wanted a lot of sex—"I'm Italian! I have this gene!"-and eventually they divorced, and Thurston wanted something, mainly a lot of sex without having to beg for it, and to be found attractive again. But on all the traditional dating sites, the women didn't just want sex. They wanted companionship and respect and a relationship with a forward trajectory. They wanted hand-holding and flowers and surprises. They wanted love. Not for me, said Thurston. Thurston wanted sex, and he wanted eagerness about the sex. So one day when he was at the gym, he saw this old guy with a very pretty young lady, and when Thurston expressed confusion to his trainer, his trainer explained that the geezer was her sugar daddy and that the young fawn was his sugar baby.

Well, you could barely keep Thurston on a lat-press machine after that. He dashed home and did some Googling and found SeekingArrangement.com, a site built for wealthy (to varying degrees) men who are seeking a formal (to varying degrees) arrangement for sex and (to varying degrees) companionship with someone who in turn is looking for cash and prizes without any drama. Drama, according to Thurston, includes taking your time to decide whether you want to have sex, having any motive beyond the one you stipulated up front (which was greed), and a presumption that you will be courted. No, sir. Thurston's courting days are over.

Sugar dating is the oldest dynamic around: Rich person contracts poorer but younger/hotter person into some combination of obligations that includes but is only rarely limited to straight-up sex. As long as people have had money and other people have wanted money, this has been a thing. But technology has affected this minieconomy twofold: First, as with any Etsy shop, anyone with a good to sell can now easily intersect with someone who wants this good; and second, it has created a culture of righteous entitlement, in which a fringe thing feels mainstream when you find enough people who participate in it.

SeekingArrangement is just one of several sugar-dating sites, but a popular one. On all these websites, the splash page features a beautiful young woman, elegant but with sideboob, and either she's overtly dangling a piece of jewelry or she is wearing it. She looks into the camera. Each time, a man, older, nearing silver status, is looking right at her, unable to take his rich, priapic eves off her. He has the beginnings of malepattern baldness: baldness that says, "I've lived, I have money, here is a bracelet." He is about to lean into her neck, maybe take a big old bite out of it, and she hangs back, only for a moment, only to tell us her secret, which is: "Look, I got a bracelet."

Everyone on SeekingArrangement knows what they're there for, Thurston says. What is so bad about formalizing the arrangement so that we can all just go home happy? And aside from that unpleasantness with that woman who scammed him, all Thurston had to wrestle with. really, was the nagging guilt that maybe this whole sugar-dating thing isn't so okay, particularly since he began before his divorce was even finalized. "I went to church every Sunday. This felt like an ethical dilemma." But he reminded himself that he was actually helping someone, a poor student, or someone who badly needed the money for, I don't know, medical bills or back taxes or vaping supplies. And that's what it came down to: "The whole concept of a sugar daddy intrigued me, because even if I were dating someone traditionally, I'd give them money anyway."

In any case, Thurston found no shortage of willing candidates eager to accept his altruism, and he dated a bunch of them at once, feeling like a "kid in a candy store." Eventually he settled on one very beautiful woman, 28, in real estate, with a Wells Fargo account that he could drop \$5,000 into each month. A note on the negotiation, from Thurston: "A lot of women put like \$10,000" in their online profiles as their hoped-for monthly stipend, but "you just say 'I'll give you \$3,000' and they say yes." But he was still a novice at this, so he offered her \$5,000, and she jumped at it. They saw each other for five years.

Thurston got his happy ending, and he never got scammed again. And he knows he got off easy with that woman; there are worse and more humiliating scams in the sugar-dating zip code than just losing

FEEL LIKE MAKIN' LOVE

(IN EXCHANGE FOR A MONTHLY STIPEND)

Want a clear window into the sugar-daddy economy? Just taking a brief scan of the men's profiles on SeekingArrangement .com will do the trick. (Get it? Trick?)

USERNAME: John

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

"A...Russian speaking model that is young, slender, tall and does not speak any English! LOL!"

OH, AND ALSO: "I prefer a younger woman, and one of her, not mine, favorite restaurants is the Olive Garden. This means that she is not spoiled, yet."

BUT ENOUGH ABOUT

YOU... "Many young men tell me that when they grow up, they want to be like me."

USERNAME:

Jeremy

"A lovely smile, fantastic teeth and lips, hopefully a tanned clear complexion, great skin and look fantastic in red!"

BUT ESPECIALLY:
"Love of high

heels is mandatory (Louboutin being my favorite)." AND GOOD NEWS! "If we get on over time you should be prepared to relocate."

USERNAME:

TravelGuy2Fly

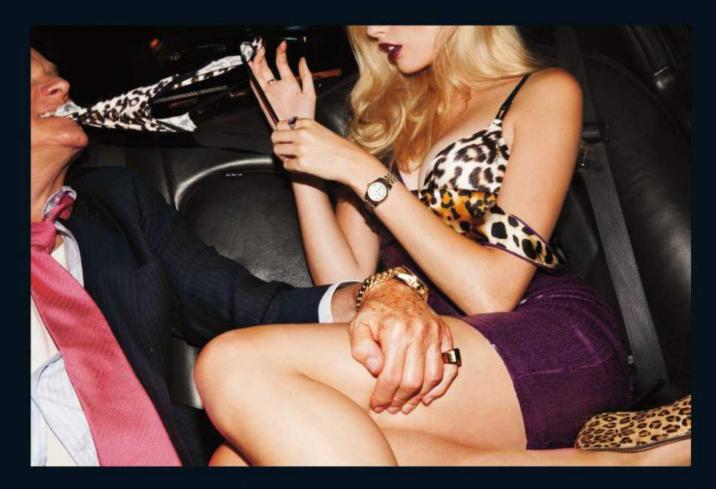
SUGAR MANTRA:
"Looking to Turn Up!"
WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

"Beautiful, intelligent extremely sensual and passionate looking for a no drama woman who will understand my schedule.

Must... take pride in your appearance and hygiene."

WHAT HE'S NOT:

"If your profile says a few extra pounds or average it would be best find someone who is into that."



a few hundred bucks. Back in October, Manhattan millionaire Paul Aronson, 85-85!-was left tied to his coffee table for twenty hours by 17-year-old twins he met through SeekingArrangement. He was rescued eventually, but while the twins got what they came for, poor Paul never did. In 2013, Google executive Forrest Hayes spent his last hours nodding off on his yacht after the sugar baby he met on the site injected him (willingly) with heroin; he (less willingly) died in front of her. (The sugar baby, Alix Tichelman, pleaded guilty to involuntary manslaughter this spring and was sentenced to six years in jail.)

But those cases are anomalies, for the most part. For the most part, the scamming in sugar dating is mutual.



2. KITTEN BABYPUSS

There was a really famous TV star at the bar of the Manhattan restaurant where I met Kitten Babypuss (not her real name), but not one person was looking at him. Instead, it was Kitten, with her fake fur and her high heels and tight jeans and her elaborately etched glitter makeup, who drew everyone's eyes—a very beautiful Bratz

doll. It was Kitten, 23, lip liner slightly darker than her lipstick, lips that I sort of wanted to touch, who made a woman in her forties stare so angrily that her husband forced her to change seats so that her back was to Kitten.

Kitten left home when she was 18 after a fight with her family over a boyfriend, and she wasn't welcome back, not even after the relationship ended. She wound up in a program for homeless youth and lived in a shelter. Most of the girls there weren't pretty like her, and they'd make fun of her, saying, "What are you doing here, princess?" She never felt safe.

One day, she saw a Dr. Phil segment about sugar dating. "They were talking shit about it, saying it wasn't a good thing to do." But Kitten saw it differently; she saw a way out. "I wondered how would my life be different if rather than leave a relationship with nothing, I left with more than I came into it with." She signed up with SeekingArrangement before she even left the shelter.

Kitten was in it to pay for her education. She wants to become a choreographer, and the money has been really helpful. Kitten says that it isn't always about sex: There were some nebbishy men (and some women; she's sugar-dated both) who just

wanted companionship. "A lot of them are very lonely and they don't have time to go through traditional dating because they're so successful. And they really don't have time to woo a woman or to like, you know, answer your phone calls."

Kitten doesn't like to think of it as getting paid for sex—she thinks of the sex as just something that happens naturally when two people spend time together. And she thinks of the money as a contribution a real boyfriend would make, just more. Sometimes she gets a wad of money to go buy some clothing. Other times, it's concert tickets with backstage passes. Prada sunglasses, Jimmy Choos, Armani clothing, her Honda Civic...

But the world can be a judgmental place. Kitten was teaching dance to kids for a while, and then one of the parents caught wind of what she did on the side, and suddenly there was no room for Kitten in the next season's teaching roster. The woman who had protested against her, according to Kitten, had escaped her abusive husband by secretly setting aside extra money until she could afford to leave him. "And I was like, 'You're not doing anything different than I'm doing, except you're stealing.'" Which, sure, those two things seem exactly the same. *(continued on page 248)*









PERHAPS THIS HAS already happened to you. If not, consider it inevitable. Your glass holds an unexpected style of wine, one that comes from a place you might not know makes wine. The flavors will be mysterious but alluring. But you will not be drinking Cabernet or another grape that has joined the brotherhood of the super-extracted or the legion of

the profoundly oaky. The bottles most coveted since wine's revival in the 1980s are now so overpriced that only old-timers with family fortunes and youngsters with tech start-ups have the means to drink them. All the grandiose cru red Burgundies, polishedto-a-spit-shine California Cabernets, haughty-as-hell red Bordeaux, and Montrachets that glow like pirates' gold, while still the pinnacle of collectability, are no longer for the rational, only for the rich. They are to this century what Fabergé eggs were to the last: playthings of the privileged. If you've never had them and wonder what you're missing, they're tasty enough but oddly similar.

Wine critic Robert Parker, whose rise to power catalyzed wine's comeback and whose 100-point scoring system became its backbone, isn't entirely to blame for what he wrought—an unhealthy worldwide devotion to bombastic wines selling at monumental prices. At the beginning, he was an impassioned reformer whose critiques rescued a faltering industry. He was adamant that winemaking standards had to improve, steadfastly stood up for the consumer, and introduced important winemakers to the

public. The end of his usefulness occurred not long ago, about the time his scoring system stopped making sense, new-oak aging became a bore, wines started to lose their soul, and prices rose absurdly. These days the most sought-after vineyards are often bought and run by people who understand how to make fortunes. not wines.

There's hope: A new and admirable era is upon us. It's not about an upstart wine country such as Argentina or South Africa, its winemakers eager to join the existing wine community, gaining entry by producing an alternative to Bordeaux or a cheaper Merlot. Such producers weren't rebels; they merely embraced the status quo. It's different now. The old world of wine was about elegance and prosperity. The emerging wine pioneers are eccentric, idealistic, and passionate. Some are admirably poor.

They wear T-shirts faded by the sun and bearing the logo of an agricultural fair they attended years ago. They are sinewy, a consequence of working the fields and having no interest in hosting three-star luncheons. If they have an extra \$500, they spend it on farm equipment, not haircuts. They exude personal authenticity. Their philosophy of wine and life is taking hold in scattered regions of the world, particularly in Europe.

You'll find them in Jura, an overlooked *département* of France best known for cheese; in Macedonia, a northerly region of Greece that was Alexander the Great's



Arianna Occhipinti swirls a decanter of Albanello—a grape that was once popular in Sicily but has fallen out of favor for being difficult to grow and late to ripen.

old stomping ground; on Corsica, an island that belongs to France but owes much of its past to Italy; and even in the forgotten farmlands of Sicily.

These winemakers depend, for the most part, on unknown native grapes you've never heard of: Poulsard, Xinomavro, and Frappato, to mention a few. They tend to live in the countryside, near or in their vineyards, which are often organic (no artificial fertilizers or pesticides in the vineyard; limited preservatives in the wine) and sometimes biodynamic (organic plus holistic benefits). They seek to work the land patiently and strive to understand hilly, sometimes even shaggy, vineyards that some of these winemakers have planted themselves. They are enamored with odd pieces of ancient equipment, like wooden de-stemmers that date from the seventeenth century.

They're not obsessed with new oak, the holy grail of twentieth-century wine. They do not rely on consultants—well-paid enologists who jet in to upgrade wine production and, some say, make all wines taste distressingly alike. They are restoring randomness to wine, rejecting the cloning that takes place in nurseries and severely limits genetic diversity. Instead, they are grafting in vineyards, embracing untamed vines. These upstart

winemakers are forever changing their blends, their grapes, their styles, whenever inspiration strikes, rather than striving for sameness in perpetuity. What emerges from their bottles is fresh, juicy, spicy, energetic, often a touch rustic, sometimes twinkling in the mouth. Rarely are their wines made to be aged. These wines do one thing, for certain: They plant new ideas in your head.

Sampling them is like dining in the kitchen of a gifted cook living in a country you've never visited before, and have only just begun to explore. You're startled, then transfixed. Food is sometimes said to be made with love; these wines are unfailingly made that way. At a time when diners demand something novel every time they order a dish, we're finally starting to apply those identical standards to what's filling our stemware. The compelling force behind the movement is not critics who score wines but, of all things, young American sommeliers who are open-minded in a way their long-established French counterparts are not. Their research takes them beyond dusty encyclopedias and into Instagram; their travels take them across borders disregarded

by traditional sommeliers. They rely on their instincts, not decades-old hierarchies, and they are willing to recommend bottles with price tags in two figures, not three or four. They are the champions of the new era of rebel winemakers.

So let's begin meals with something other than a glass of Pinot Grigio. Let's allow the sommelier to bring out his favorite bottle. But first, let's learn about the winemakers who are altering everything you've come to expect from wine, and the rules they live by.

OSEPHINE SCHIEL

RULE 1

Keep sacred the grape.

Domaine Comte Abbatucci, Corsica

OVER THE HILL COMES a John Deere electric-powered utility vehicle, Jean-Charles Abbatucci at the wheel. I climb in. Abbatucci floors it. That means fifteen miles per hour, actually quite fast in a mountainside vine-yard, the tiny truck tilting on the uneven ground—Mr. Abbatucci's Wild Ride.

"Disneyland?" I yell into his ear.

"Corsica-land," he says, laughing.

Clearly, life on this precipitous Mediterranean island is as wonderful as legends and travel guides say. It's a little French, inasmuch as it is politically connected to that country. It's a little Italian, inasmuch as it's slightly closer in nautical miles to Italy and pizza appears to be a popular snack.

I've been on innumerable vineyard tours, but this is the first where I'd have been happy to buy a ticket. It's not just the riotous vehicle, the laughing driver, the infinite twists through the hills. Nor is it the grapes, biodynamic since 2000. Our ride takes us past big, good-natured workhorses that Jean-Charles brought here from mainland France. We pause to study dozens of wild plants: lavender, fennel, immortelle (a flower with supposed anti-aging properties), an untamed botanical garden of unparalleled diversity.

When I first arrived in the seaside community of Porto Pollo—pronounced porto poll if you're speaking Corsican-accented French but spelled Porti Poddu in Corsican—I telephoned Abbatucci's partner to request driving directions to the winery. She told me to make a left out of my hotel, drive ten kilometers, make a right at the yellow mailbox onto a narrow road, proceed over the winding bridge, look for the restaurant that says Abbatucci, ignore it, then stop in front of the big electric door with no name on it.

This is one of Earth's most spectacular destinations, basically a mountain range plopped into the sea. Just as incomparable is Abbatucci. The fame of the present-day Jean-Charles-there have been other Abbatuccis with the name-comes in part from his reputation as a historian of his island, his family, and the local grapes, and also from his skills as a grower, producer, blender, and master of the vineyard. His top-of-the-line bottling, the Cuvée Collection, is made from ancient vines planted in part by his father in 1965 and grown in a secluded plot almost sacred in its aura, one that he calls "the bible of the vinevards of Corsica." The three Cuvées are named for his ancestors, more fabulous than yours, in all likelihood: The name Abbatucci is inscribed on the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, signifying that a relative was a general in the army of Napoleon. Throughout history, the Abbatuccis could make war or wine with equal proficiency.

Go Beyond the Pinot



Set aside your usual pour just this once and take an eight-bottle tour of new-era winemaking



TAKE THE JURA CHALLENGE

• Jura is France's emerging region; Stéphane Tissot is its artist in residence. His red 2014 DD (\$33) is an earthy, zippy blend of Jura's three main red grapes, while the 2013 Patchwork Chardonnay (\$27) is tart—be prepared.



THE GREEK FREAKS

Kir-Yianni's 2013
 Samaropetra (\$16)
 white is a rare artisan
 Greek blend, and
 surprising in its
 complexity. The 2010
 Ramnista (\$24), all
 Xinomavro grapes,
 is tannic, tasty, and
 young. Grab the
 superb 2011 vintage
 and stack cases in
 your cellar.



THE SICILIAN WAY

• Dominated by an ancient Moscato, Occhipinti's white 2013 SP68 (\$25) is flowery and easy to drink. The 2012 Siccagno Nero d'Avola red (\$40) is dark, rich, and admirably balanced—a nice change for a stalwart grape of Southern Italian winemaking.



YES, YOU CORSICAN

• Comte Abbatucci's old-vines Faustine blanc (\$30) is pure Vermentino, pale, lean, and lovely, but its red 2012 CN (\$80) is the eye-opener. Made from nearly extinct Carcajolu-Neru grapes, it's a noseful of warm North African spices.—A.R.

He showed me a tome produced by his father in the mid-twentieth century, the title translating as *Contribution to the Knowledge of Blending*, within it details of the native grapes of his country and the locales where they grew. Vermentino is the grape that built the island's reputation, if indeed it has one. There are other grapes, though many are vanishing due to a lack of interest or people to care for them. Abbatucci cares, though. He, like many rebel winemakers, seeks out abandoned vines, often traveling to remote villages where they might once have grown.

I drink an impeccable white from the Cuvée Collection called Il Cavalière Diplomate d'Empire, named for Jacques-Pascal Abbatucci, a diplomat. The grapes in it are all, save one, virtually unknown to the rest of the world: Biancu Gentile, Brustiano, Genovese, Rossola Bianca, and of course, Vermentino. Abbatucci's wines are wildly scented, smoky, herbal, and floral—but at the same time often more silken than blends from traditional wine regions. They stand out for their purity. He boasts that his wines have "all the perfume of Corsica."

The Abbatucci family history goes back centuries to men who were papal guards. Some of the old stone houses in Corsican villages are 400 years old, but the Abbatucci ancestral home in Zicavo, where Jean-Charles lived as a boy, is 500 years old. It is as close to a château as can be found in Corsica. The heirlooms scattered about are treasures, really: a cabinet of medals, clothing of generals and ministers, a gold-braided coat, a pistol with bayonet attached.

He shows me a letter promoting an Abbatucci to *général de division* in l'Armée d'Italie. The document is dated 1787 and signed "Bonaparte." The history of Corsica is real, tangible. In the case of Abbatucci's wines, it is on the tip of your tongue.

RULE 2

Experiment and get funky. Domaine André et Mireille Tissot, Jura, France

THE JURA REGION in France is minuscule nestled into the country's eastern curve spooning Switzerland-and if that isn't enough of a handicap, it's cold, too. It is, however, next door to Burgundy, which means it should have been discovered by sommeliers and wine buyers long before now. Except few bothered making the trip, not much more than an hour's drive. "There was no reason to," says Robert Bohr, wine director at the restaurant Charlie Bird in New York City. "Until six or seven years ago, Burgundy wasn't that expensive. You could find Bourgogne Blanc and village-level reds for \$50 to \$60. None exist at that price anymore. Burgundy has become prohibitively expensive."

Jura could have been more famous if only Pinot Noir grew as well here as in Burgundy. (The Pinot Noir of Jura is charming, not collectible.) Instead, the red grapes for which Jura is known are Poulsard and Trousseau. which take a little getting used to—they are curiously light and exotically scented, startling, gamey, bracing, about as different from the staples of the conventional wine world as can be. They are also captivating. The wines of Jura are now so well regarded that even Guillaume d'Angerville of the estate Marquis d'Angerville, a Burgundy stalwart, has purchased land there and is producing white wine. Some vineyards in his Burgundy neighborhood sell for a million euros a hectare, though, as he tells me, "not for the best land."

In the fields of Domaine André et Mireille Tissot in Jura, Stéphane Tissot seeks the best. It is 6:45 A.M., still dark, and already he frets. The harvest must begin at dawn, and fifteen or twenty pickers have yet to arrive.

The night has been alive with thunder and moments of rain, and he suspects the worst: that the pickers believe the harvest has been postponed. But it is on schedule, and the estate, ordinarily charming in a Hansel and Gretel way, now looks like a military encampment, a jumping-off place for a looming battle: trucks flashing yellow lights, equipment being checked—pruning shears, plastic pails. The missing men and women finally arrive. Tissot relaxes momentarily.

His father, André, who came back from the war in Algeria in 1962 and started the estate, is in charge of quality control, but he is largely cherished for his Maurice Chevalier-like charm. Most everyone calls him "Papa." In Algeria he met people from Bordeaux who persuaded him to bottle his own wine, not sell his grapes to a cooperative or a *négociant*. They taught him that with wine, it was what went into the bottle that counted. That is how one of the greatest estates of Jura came to be.

For two days, I ride alongside Tissot as he oversees the September harvest. He dresses the same both days: baseball cap, golf shirt, shorts, and almost-knee-high rubber boots that he removes by hooking a heel on the trailer hitch of his Toyota Land Cruiser and yanking out his leg. On day one he says, "This is a big day for the selection of the *vin* rouge. You work all year, and in two weeks you make the wine. You cannot make mistakes." He pulls out with me in the passenger seat, hanging on. He is the only person I have known to look at his iPhone while driving in reverse. When he stops, he opens the door and jumps out, not bothering to close it, like in a cop movie, only he is not returning fire. He is everywhere, looking in every direction.

Tissot is a perfectionist. This appears to be a time of pleasure and camaraderie for the family and the pickers, but for him it is a time of stress and vigilance. He is alert for





the inevitable crisis, usually occurring when the pickers are not doing the selection as precisely as he wishes. "If you want quality, every grape must be checked," he says. That is why he pays them by the hour, not by the kilogram; he wants them to freely discard unworthy grapes.

Shriveled bunches are tossed; those with undesirable pink berries are saved for the production of Crémant—a sparkling white made outside the Champagne region—and his is among the best. At lunch I ask Mireille to tell me who is the better winemaker, her husband or her son, and she says, "Stéphane." Even André admits Stéphane's wines are more drinkable and refreshing.

The wines of Domaine André et Mireille Tissot are more celebrated now than ever before. The range is vast—Stéphane is always curious, always experimental. He could very well be Chief Winemaker for the Emerging Wine World. He has wine aging in amphorae. He makes wine from the local Savagnin grape, which by tradition is deliberately oxidized. He has grapes drying on the roof of his winery, reached by a spiral staircase.

"I'm more of a classicist than a guy who appreciates natural wines, but I love Tissot because he makes both," says Robert Bohr of Charlie Bird. "You can have a wine for people like me. Or you can have the adventurous kind that's beloved in Paris wine bars."

Every time we stop to taste or talk, Stéphane is uneasy. Every moment is crucial to him; the pickers must be watched because they lack his meticulousness. "All wine is precise," he says. Stéphane hurries me, tells me to get in the SUV. We are off, but to where? He looks at me, laughs. "We are going to see a doctor for my hyperactivity."

RULE 3

Keep it cheap (and unpronounceable).

Kir-Yianni, Macedonia, Greece

BEFORE THE SADNESS—the hail that destroys a harvest—there is the good news: Greece is blessed, not from a fiscal standpoint but as an emerging wine country with a multitude of promising regions. This is not an island country of beaches, as generally thought, but a mountainous land of slopes ideal for vineyards. The climate is Mediterranean, the soil diverse, the winemakers industrious, the desire for vitality and innovation apparent, the potential endless. "Greece today is different than Americans think," says Stellios Boutaris, owner of the wine estate

← A truckload of Xinomavro grapes from one of the Kir-Yianni estate's vineyards in Greece, ready to reach their beautiful bottled potential.

✓ Stéphane Tissot and the barrels of wine in his cellar that are helping make a name for the Jura region of France.

Kir-Yianni, located in Greek Macedonia (not to be confused with the Republic of Macedonia, a landlocked country stacked directly above). "We are not a country of moussaka, ouzo, and donkeys."

Kir-Yianni came about when Stellios's father, Yiannis, now the mayor of Thessaloniki, left the family wine business in 1996 and set out on his own, establishing the estate on land he bought in 1968. Stellios took over in 2004, expanding a rare-for-its-time independent brand with terroir-driven wines.

Greece's emerging wine regions are specializing in indigenous, approachable grapes: Xinomavro in Macedonia, Agiorgitiko in Neméa, Assyrtiko in Santorini, and the list goes on—all essentially unknown to the wider world. How does an American sommelier persuade someone to take a chance on a mystifying bottle from a radical winemaker? He could evangelize. If that fails, he might emphasize new-era value and the similarity of the unknown grape to familiar ones. In Greece's case, you might learn that Assyrtiko references Albariño from Spain, Moschofilero brings to mind Muscat or Vermentino, Xinomavro sug-

gests Nebbiolo from Italy. At dinner one evening, Boutaris paired his 2001 Ramnista, made entirely from Xinomavro, with summertruffle risotto, bringing the aura and aromas of Italy to Greece. Unlike many of the wines from the world's emerging regions, Ramnista is made to age, and does so beautifully. And unlike many wines that age beautifully, a bottle costs only \$25. maybe less.

If a wine is this affordable, the kind of destruction wrought by a massive hailstorm-like the one that hit Kir-Yianni's Náoussa vineyards on July 22, 2014-hurts all the more. "At 6 р.м., the hail started," recalls Boutaris. "It is a sad story. It only lasted an hour. Usually the Greek Department of Agriculture contracts planes to fly into the mountains, shoot chemicals into the clouds to defreeze them and create rain, but last year there is a problem with the contract and there are no planes."

When the hailstorm began, Boutaris was in Thessaloniki and quickly set course for his estate. "I was driving and crying," he says. I arrived a few months later, and the vineyards still resembled battlefields. Outside the redbrick office was an employee's Volkswagen, its

hail-pockmarked roof glittering in the bright sunshine like a disco ball. Boutaris showed me smashed grapes still on the ground, the result of ice balls the size of quail eggs crushing whatever they struck. At the end there was no Xinomavro to harvest. The few grapes remaining were unusable. Hail is not unknown in wine-producing regions—it happens frequently in Burgundy, where it hasn't diminished the staggering prosperity—but recovery is always slower in emerging regions. A lost vintage from Boutaris's best vineyard is difficult to absorb. New-era winemakers are hardy, but they're not invincible.

What they are is resilient and resourceful, respectful of the ways of the past but wide open to the future. Boutaris straddles both the old wine world and the new, part patrician and part artisan. At the time Kir-Yianni was born, it stood as cutting-edge, and today he remains a pioneer of the embryonic modern Greek wine industry. He says the old ways of wine can be pretentious, but the new ways—funky, biodynamic—can be self-righteous. Asked which way he is tipping, he replies, "I might be wearing a shirt and jacket, but my approach is like those wearing T-shirts and boots. I have not put a tie on for some time."

RULE 4

Do it yourself. All of it.

Occhipinti, Sicily

SHE'S A VISION from a fourteenth-century Italian altarpiece: round face, black eyes, features as elemental and timeless as Sicily itself. Her English is broken but mellifluous. The term "pH" becomes *pi-ach-e*, three syllables, gorgeously elongated. In action, she is in the moment and then she has left the moment, moving too fast.

Arianna Occhipinti is entirely about elegance, you think when you meet her, and then she drives you to an industrial complex where she is picking up metal grates for the floor of her winery, because this is what a working winemaker does. She drives three times the posted speed and has an excuse: The limits are unjustly low. She maneuvers her winery forklift with the reflexes of a Ferrari race-car driver, zipping stainless-steel tanks out the door so she can replace them with concrete vats, the old way having become fashionable again. Her confidence never falters, at least not publicly, but she bites her nails as she drives.

Her winery sits deep in the south of Sicily, in the Vittoria (continued on page 251)

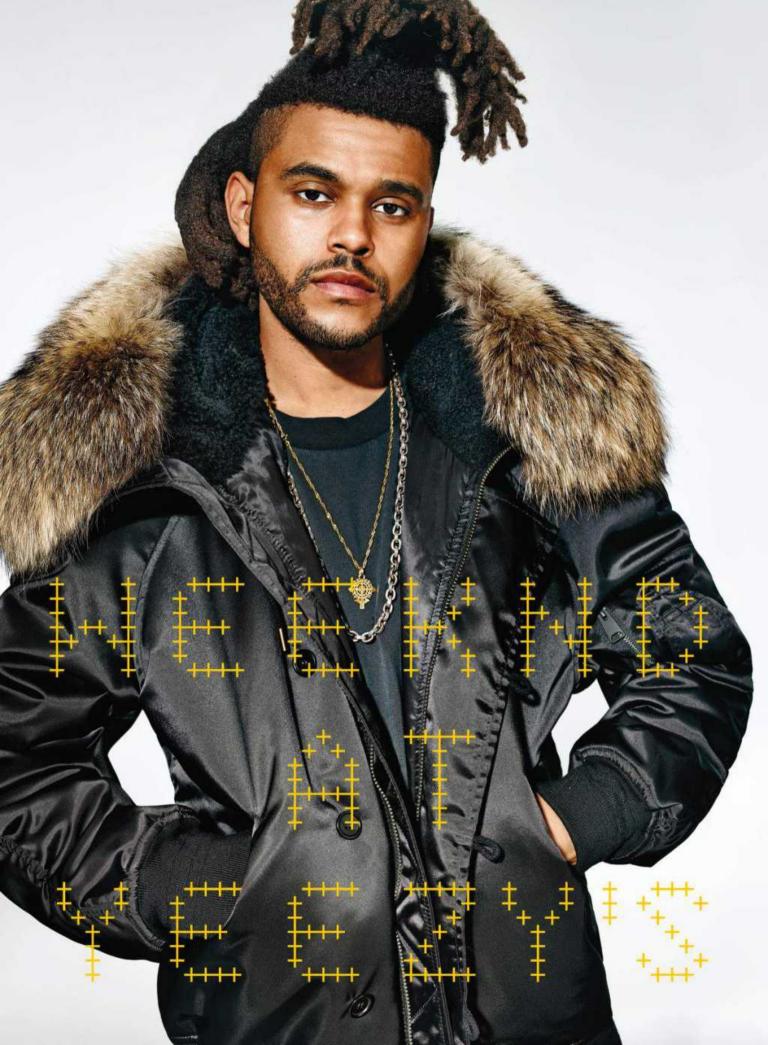
















YOU CAN NOW BUY KANYE'S CLOSET

KANYE WEST has been talking big about being a fashion designer for years—and his first proper men's collection hits stores in October. The result is an impressively restrained statement about fit (baggy up top, slim below), color (dusty), and heritage (military). It's as though Kanye has put his own obsessively honed closet up for sale. It's expensive (West's wardrobe would be), but also sophisticated and wear-tested by Ye himself. So what does The Weeknd think? "I feel like he targeted someone like me," the singer says. "The camo, the black boots. the nonchalant vagrant look. I relate to it." WILL WELCH

hoodie \$545

sweatpants \$545 sneakers \$200 Kanye West and adidas YEEZY Season 1

grooming by hee soo kwon using malin+goetz. prop styling by juliet jernigan at clm.

where to buy it? go to gq.com/go /fashiondirectories



MEET THE STEPHEN KING OF POP

The 25-year-old Toronto singer The Weeknd. born Abel Tesfave. dominated speaker boxes this summer with "Can't Feel My Face," a stonecold groove produced by pop wizard Max Martin that pairs a Michael Jackson-ish beat with Tesfaye's otherworldly voice. The song's impact was instantaneous-I encountered dancing baristas at a coffee shop the day after the song came out—but if you sensed something disturbing in the mix, maybe it's because the lyric is basically one long cocaine euphemism.

Before he went on a tear through the pop charts (see also: "Earned It," from the Fifty Shades soundtrack), The Weeknd was known for a trio of free mixtapes that were psychotically dark. When I tell him I know people who simply find his music too depraved. he replies, "That makes me feel good. Some people love PG horror movies, and some people love R-rated hoccor movies." Never mind that all his shit is definitely NC-17.

If it seems strange that a horror singer would team up with Martin-he produced the Backstreet Boysfor a new album called Beauty Behind the Madness (out August 28), maybe it's best not to overthink it. One guy brings the slick pop perfection; the other shines a black light into the filthiest corners of the room. "Max's studio used to be Marilyn Monroe's old house," Tesfaye tells me. "I came up with the concept for a song called 'In the Night' in her bedroom. Unfortunately, I couldn't help but imagine Joe DiMaggio's sperm everywhere on the floor."-W.W.



HIMSELF LIVE ON FACEBOOK

ZACH BARON

Illustration by John Ritter

IT'S LATE AFTERNOON, MAY 5, 2014, and Daniel Wolfe walks up a shady street through bright sunshine, the heat still rising as the light falls. There's hardly anyone around to see him, but still he's a sight: a big lumbering shadow, six feet four, two forty, with a bad knee and a black backpack, a tall broad man among the low quiet houses. He's wearing plaid shorts, black-and-green tennis shoes, a dark-color shirt. His backpack contains most of what he's got left. Discharge papers. Records from V.A. hospitals in two states. Old warrants for his arrest. He's got a V.A.-issued pamphlet on "Pain and Pain Management" and an appointment card for "Mandatory Suicide Prevention Education," dated three months ago. He's got a bottle of Jack Daniel's, a cell phone, and a box cutter. »

ON FAGEBOOK, he goes by the name Cerberus Rey Wolfe, after the three-headed hellhound to which Marines send fresh souls. The first photo that appears on his feed is of two half-empty liquor bottles. No one thinks much of it. No one really responds.

Byeee bitches, Daniel had written.

The next photo shows a palm and a leg with cuts all over them. Some of the wounds seem tentative—scratches, really. Others are not so tentative.

The room he's in seems like it could be anywhere. The floor is cheap light-colored wood. The walls are a yellowish white. There's what looks like a bedspread visible—floral, thin, drenched in blood.

The caption reads, Is it real yet fuckers.

HIS MOTHER and stepfather are at home. Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, over on the east side of town past the payday loan spots and the Chili's, strip malls unspooling as you head toward the outer edge. They're in bed, not that long after the sun sets, when the phone rings. Kris Norman is a friend of Daniel's out in California—a Marine, like Daniel used to be. He asks if Mike and Teresa have seen Daniel recently.

They haven't. To be honest, they're not sure where he is, whether Daniel's here in Broken Arrow or if he's in another state entirely. Over the past two years he's come and gone so much it's hard to say.

"Well, he's posting on Facebook that he's gonna hurt himself," Kris says.

Maybe three or four years ago, when Daniel was still married and living out in California with his wife and child, this would've been alarming. But the truth is, so much has happened since then that, after they hang up, Mike and Teresa don't even bother going online to open Facebook. They've grown so used to worrying about Daniel that they don't know how to worry more.

So they're asleep when the doorbell rings. Wagoner County sheriff's deputy Nick Mahoney, slight, still young, shifting from leg to leg out on their porch. Deputy Mahoney says they've been getting calls from some of Daniel's friends and fellow vets about these Facebook posts. Teresa, who is kind and tired, tells Deputy Mahoney what she told Kris, what she's had to get used to telling the steady procession of law enforcement stopping by on nights like this one: Daniel hasn't been in good shape these past couple of years. He came back from Iraq with PTSD and a traumatic brain injury. He's prone to depression, especially now that he can't see his daughter. He can behave dramatically sometimes.

"But I don't think that he would intentionally hurt himself," she says.

Teresa has been using Facebook to keep an eye on Daniel now that they don't really speak. She hasn't had the will to look at it today yet, but she tells Deputy Mahoney to come in; they'll call up Daniel's profile and look together.

The deputy walks into the house. Teresa turns on the computer, and that's how she sees what Daniel's been doing.

THE POSTS HAD begun before the photos did, and so you could read back through them in a kind of rising panic, now that you knew what they meant. What he was saying.

On Sunday night he'd written:

The only fight I ever lost was the one to myself.

And then:

When my body moves no more give me a vikings funneral.

And then today, in that stream-of-consciousness way he had:

Living is to suffer the herd will walk through life never testing the rules or pushing against fences doing what their told they live and die the "honest" life but the wolf will stray and take on the wrongs with a force unmatched by obsticles he will die a warriors death alone before he ever conforms or gives in to rules that create injustice...a warriors death is what i seek in the valley of all these sheep....

A few minutes after that:

Im serious i want a viking funneral push me out on a wooden raft soaked in gasand oil in a pond or a lake once im a good distance out shoot a flaming arrow and torch mu raft....

And then finally the photos, four of them in quick succession, they just got worse.

In the final image all you could see was his leg. Deeper cuts crisscrossing the lighter ones that had come before. Jagged punctures. Rivulets running off his thigh. Everything red beneath it.

Above that one he'd written *Im leakinging* good now.

TODAY, MAY 5, is the anniversary of the day she and Daniel met, and that fact is making Crystal nervous. But there's so much else she's dealing with right now. She and Jaden, who's 5, were homeless in California after Crystal's mom got sick of Crystal being so withdrawn all the time and asked her to leave. So they'd come here a couple of weeks ago, to Elizabethtown, Kentucky, living in a house with Crystal's friend and her friend's husband and their nine children until she and Jaden could afford a place of their own. Tonight she's just trying to take her mind off Daniel.

Eight years ago, the California desert near Palm Springs: Crystal, shy and smiley, her blonde hair dyed black, is with a friend visiting the Marine Corps base in Twentynine Palms. This giant of a guy walks in covered in dirt, fresh out of the field, and Crystal offers him some of the lasagna she's brought—she proffers it in a Ziploc bag, and this guy doesn't even blink, just sucks the cold lasagna out of the bag like it's a Capri Sun. Crystal's already giggling when he asks for more. Later that night they all caravan down to San Diego to a hookah bar. Everybody's smoking and drinking, and here's this guy, sitting by himself. Crystal thought he looked lonely and handsome and sad. He was 20 years old, she was 21. They were drawn to the same things: horror films, drinking, the color black. Later, when Daniel was in Iraq, he'd write to her about that night, telling her she was right. "Crystal I met you at a low low time in my life everything had me slammed against a wall with nothing I was afraid of myself despite my size," he confessed.



THE EPIDEMIC OF MILITARY SHICIDE

The staggering reality of America's post-9/11 era of perpetual war: For every active-duty serviceman killed in combat, twenty veterans died by their own hand.





✓ Daniel (center) in the Marines. ← ← Daniel and Crystal.
 ← Daniel and his daughter, Jaden, on the same afternoon that Crystal got a restraining order.

He'd already been in the Marines a couple of years, enlisted straight out of high school. Mike and Teresa had moved to Bellevue, Washington, after the oil bust hit Oklahoma in the '80s, and so Bellevue is where Daniel grew up, a popular gentle giant of a guy. He wasn't great in school but he had an aptitude for drawing-skulls, skeletons, reapers swinging scythes. He liked to snowboard and listen to metal. He played football and was always the biggest guy on the field. That's how he'd make friends. He'd knock teammates five feet back during practice, pick them up off the ground, then do it again. Off the field, all those smaller kids felt protected by him. He gave them rides to school. None of his friends were surprised when he joined the Marines. He was always kind of a warrior badass. It just made sense.

In September, four months after they met, Daniel asked Crystal to marry him. He did it in a hotel room opposite their favorite bar, a country saloon not far from the base. He hid the ring in that useless mini-fridge those places have and then, in the middle of a fight they were having, he asked her if she'd get him a beer. When she finally opened the little door and found the ring, she thought, "Son of a bitch!" But she said yes. He was about to leave for Iraq. But Daniel wasn't in a hurry. He just wanted Crystal to wait for him.

Eight years on from the day they met, she's sunk in that half-angry, half-pitying way of worrying about Daniel that she's had to learn since they got married and then divorced. She's finally gotten to sleep when her phone starts ringing, and so she misses Teresa's call.

THE SEGOND and third photos—when they all saw what he had begun to do to himself, they immediately set to work trying to stop him. It was like they were on one side of a window and he was on the other and if they could just find the right words, written in the right order, maybe they'd break through.

May 5, 6:06 P.M.: U need to stop all that bro.

May 5, 6:54 P.M.: yeah no shit

May 5, 7:21 P.M.: Knock that shit off it ain't good brother

They were trying to get him to say where he was. They were trying to get him to respond. To stop.

May 5, 7:45 p.m.: Bro, come on. You're better than that. We're all here for you. You're reaching out, but the wrong way. How can we help? Legit. No more statistics! Not one I served with. Talk to me brother!

MIKEY SPLAINE is on his way to band practice up in Brookfield, Massachusetts, when Matt Rush calls. "Do you see the shit Wolfe's posting?" he asks. They've been out of the Marines a while, but they keep in touch. Splaine's in the car, but he pulls over and calls up Daniel's Facebook page. The last picture posted, the worst of them, is the one he sees first.

Splaine and Daniel had met the day Splaine came onto the base, and they became friends right away. On weekends the two of them and Daniel's roommate, James Owens, would go to Palm Springs or Los Angeles or even drive the 180 miles to Vegas, which was nothing, to get away from the base. Sometimes Daniel and Owens did Triple C, which was cough medicine you could trip off-it was like an out-of-body experience, all your inhibitions evaporated. Other times they'd take so much cold medicine that their eyes would turn red. Daniel said his birth father, whom he never got to have a real relationship with, had just died, and that had fucked him up. But that was about all he volunteered about himself. Mostly they just drank. Daniel was big enough that he could take a handle of Jack Daniel's and chug the entire thing in one go—Splaine liked to call this his "disappearing trick."

Daniel's squad, which was part of the nearly 200 Marines that made up Delta Company, was first stationed at Haditha, in the Anbar Province, where a year earlier another squad of Marines had massacred twenty-four Iraqis, many of them women and children. The area was still tense. Delta slept in the Haditha Dam, in sweltering heat, and went on patrols through the surrounding area. Daniel carried a heavy machine gun,

because of his size, and was one of the first off the seven-ton truck at any sign of trouble. He kept a photo of Crystal in the truck and stared at it when he got frightened. A couple of weeks after Delta arrived in Haditha, he wrote her a letter: "I hate this I'm so scared all the time and I want to crawl up in a ball and cry." He signed his name at the bottom and, summoning whatever courage he could, wrote: "Ye though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no man for I am the badest mother fucker in the valley."

After Haditha, Daniel's squad moved south to al-Baghdadi, where every evening they'd take mortar fire. They called it "power hour." Mortars would just land everywhere around the camp. Sometimes they'd get shot at, too. It got to the point where guys wouldn't interrupt their sets in the makeshift gym to put their flak on. Daniel wrote Crystal: "I'm so scared out here any second I could be erased from the face of the earth thinking about if I die will anyone remember me I would be mourned and forgotten."

And yet somehow, as the months went on, everyone in Daniel's unit remained alive. In December, Daniel drew Crystal a Christmas card: a grinning skull wearing a Santa hat.

By April 2007, Delta was home. Everyone who'd deployed came back. When Daniel got off the bus in Twentynine Palms, Crystal was waiting for him with a set of keys to a little pink adobe house, right off the base, that Crystal had found and furnished while Daniel was away. The doorways were so small, Daniel had to duck under them. But it was a place of their own. Daniel had about a year left before his enlistment was up, and he and Splaine and Owens and the other guys settled back into their old routines to wait it out.

In the car now, Splaine scrolls back on his phone to where Daniel's recent run of Facebook posts began, Sunday night—twenty-four hours ago now: *The only fight I ever lost was the one to myself.*

He sees the other updates. Sees the photos. Splaine calls his bandmates and tells them he's not going to make it. He turns his car around, dialing the V.A.'s suicide hotline as he goes. (continued on next page)

Number killed in action during

IRAQ WAR **3,519** Afghanistan war **1,843**

Number of suicides over same period

VETS 110,000 (EST.)

ACTIVE DUTY 3,500 (EST.)

Estimated veteran suicides per day

22

Suicide rates (per 100,000) WOMEN **5.47**MEN **20.22**VETERANS **40.0**

FACEBOOK SUICIDE



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 243

THERE WERE MORE and more of them watching it happen as the hours went by. Trying to get Daniel's attention. They had been to war together, or grown up together, or they were family. They didn't all know one another—some were strangers even to Daniel-but they were united in their helplessness and their horror. The worst part now was his silence.

May 5, 8:29 P.M.: Wolfe, please don't hurt yourself like this. You have everyone (above and more) behind you 100% and resources you can turn to. I want to give you the phone number to the V.A. crisis line. It's 1-800-273-8255 (press option 1) you are loved and your life means a lot to many of us so please know that you are not alone in your struggle. We're all here to help, you just let us know how. Please.

BY THE TIME Deputy Mahoney and Teresa pull up Daniel's Facebook page, the most recent posts are hours old. That fact alone has Mike and Teresa sick. Mahoney sees that the updates came from Daniel's phone. Teresa's been dialing her son but he's not picking up. So Mahoney's next call is to the cell-phone company. They ping the phone, and the first result they get is way up north in New York, right up by the Canadian border. Was Daniel maybe trying to cross into Canada? But then the cell-phone company calls back and says they were wrong, they pinged the phone again, and this time they've got him within a half-mile radius of Tiger Hill-a little hump of land with a couple of communication towers on it over by the police station, about five miles to the west. Broken Arrow.

Mahoney starts asking Mike and Teresa the usual missing-person questions: Where in the vicinity of Tiger Hill could Daniel be? Who would let him stay with them? Mike and Teresa couldn't really say.

So Mahoney calls the cell-phone company back, and this time they're able to access the GPS on Daniel's phone. They give an address over on North 1st Street, not far from Tiger Hill. The phone should be within a hundred feet of there, they say. Mahoney radios that into the dispatch.

He's seated at Mike and Teresa's little diningroom table, right off the galley kitchen, and while they wait for word, Teresa's panic won't let her stay still. She shows Mahoney a photo of Daniel, like if only the deputy could see her son, really see him, he'd know how to help him.

But when the radio comes back to life, the deputy's guys are on North 1st Street, and there's nothing. They're walking the pavement. They're looking in the beds of trucks. They're scanning the ground for traces of blood. Nothing.

And then Daniel's cell phone goes dead and the signal disappears.

AFTER CRYSTAL had left him, Daniel started telling people a story about the war. He'd been in a terrible accident, he'd sayhis Humvee had struck an IED, and his best friend died next to him, bleeding out in his arms. When he closed his eyes, he'd say, he could still see it. There was a reason he did all these things that a normal person wouldn't do. Like right now, wherever he was, cutting up his arms and legs in some room nobody could find: There was something wrong with him and he could tell vou why.

The story wasn't true. Seven months in Iraq and everyone in his company came back alive. But how do you explain that you were scared? Scared of the mortars, of the night patrols, of Crystal leaving you while you were gone, of things you saw that you didn't even have words to describe, like the time some Iraqi blew himself up at the edge of the base, and you went over, and there was his face, perfectly preserved on the pavement. You took a picture. And you were scared. Even though nothing really happened. Even though you have no story to tell about why you feel the way you feel. How do you explain that?

At first, Daniel had no idea. And for a while after he came back, he didn't really try. He just acted like he was okay. Maybe he'd even convinced himself that he was okay. He and Crystal got sober together and promised each other they'd stay that way. They moved into their little pink house and Crystal worked on the base and in August they got married in her grandmother's backyard on the California coast. They didn't have enough money for a honeymoon so they got matching tattoos instead: skulls and roses on Crystal's foot, a skull and a tribal pattern on Daniel's chest.

By December, Crystal was pregnant, That was part of the plan-have a baby on the military's dime, then get out. Jaden Wolfe was born July 25, 2008. She had white-blonde hair and blue eyes and arrived one week early. James Owens, Daniel's old roommate, came and visited them at the hospital. It was the happiest he'd ever seen Daniel. Crystal was in bed. recovering. Daniel was sitting in a chair, this giant human holding a tiny baby like he could protect her from everything that was coming. He asked if Owens wanted to hold her, and Owens was terrified but he did it.

He left thinking: Daniel's in a good place.

YOU PUT AN OKAY face on it, sure, but this is what it's like to come back: like you're watching yourself do things you don't want to do. Anger descending from someplace you can't control.

The night before your own wedding, you broke your promise, got drunk, and started a fight over something neither of you could even remember the next day. Crystal stormed out, and you wouldn't let her back in. In the morning, you had no memory at all of what happened. You blamed it on the alcohol. You were so apologetic and sincere. She let it go, and later that day you were husband and wife.

Sometimes you thought you hated everyone. You couldn't live with people telling you what to do. After you and Crystal got married and you got out of the Marines, you moved back to Oklahoma, to Broken Arrow, and found work at an airplane-parts factory, but vou got laid off. In a bar or a restaurant, someone would say or do something and you'd just walk out. Crystal started crossing her fingers that you'd make it through social occasions without some kind of incident.

You came home in moods you couldn't control. Like after Jaden was born: You were such a good father. She was your baby girl. You took her to the park, gave her funny nicknames: Mozer the Dozer, Bubba. But patience was just impossible for you-it was like there was some physical obstacle there, you couldn't find your way past it. When Jaden would cry, you'd get frustrated and just walk away. You'd come in the front door after being gone all day and she'd run up to you screaming "DADDY!!!" and you wouldn't even look at her. You'd walk right past her and disappear into the bedroom and not come out for the rest of the night.

And now, lying there in bed, the whole lousy rest of it comes back to Mike and Teresa, the reality of who Daniel was and who he'd become settling in like a sad certainty.

The V.A. told you that you had PTSD and mTBI, a mild traumatic brain injury—whether it was football in high school or all those mortars exploding around you in Iraq, they couldn't say. You filed for disability, because if there was something wrong, they should pay for it. The V.A. wasn't the horror show that people often talk about; everyone there seemed to really care. But you kept telling yourself that the sick person the doctors were describing wasn't you.

You decided to go back to California, and Crystal found a nannying job in Orange County that paid well. So the three of you moved back to Huntington Beach, where Crystal was from, and you enrolled in college. But you were still frightened. It felt like you were disintegrating right there in front of everyone. You missed your dad-your birth dad-even though you never really knew him. You struggled with your weight. You started picking at your skin until it bled. Loud noises made vou anxious and the problem seemed to be getting worse. One time a bird flew overhead and you ducked for cover. Some nights you'd tell Crystal you were staving up to do homework and vou'd just never come to bed. She'd come out in the morning and there you'd be, bleary-eyed, exhausted, still awake.

And was your memory fading? The doctors had said it might-it can happen to people with PTSD-but you didn't think it would happen to you. And then, all of a sudden, you'd set off on your bike for school and then forget where it was and have to come back. Reluctantly, you went back to the V.A. They gave you pills for sleeping and pills for

depression, but you didn't always take them—didn't like how they made you feel. You'd made that promise to Crystal not to drink or take drugs. But after a while you felt so bad you couldn't help it. You got a credit card Crystal didn't know about, bought Jack Daniel's and cold medicine, and kept it all in a backpack underneath the bed. One day Crystal found the bag. She confronted you and then she left. She said she could forgive the moods, the anger, but not the fact that you'd lied to her. You'd been married for four years. But she said she couldn't trust you anymore.

She took Jaden.

She said: Stay in school, stay in the apartment. She said she'd live with her mom for a while and help pay rent. You can still see Jaden, she said.

But you refused. Whatever was wrong with you kept you from saving yes.

Mike rented you a U-Haul. You packed your things, said good-bye to your wife and your daughter, and drove back to Oklahoma.

And then you were alone.

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IT'S LATE NOW, after midnight, and Deputy Mahoney is running out of ideas. He does the only thing left he can think to do: He and his dispatcher start calling hotels. They call every hotel in the city of Tulsa. Every hotel in the city of Broken Arrow. Every halfway house, every shelter, every place they can think of, they call. They look at the photos on Daniel's Facebook page and describe what they see. They save one of the photos, crop out Daniel, and start texting it to hotel clerks. Most say they don't recognize the room; some say they kind of do but there's no guest matching Daniel's description. Finally Mahoney hits on one, over by Admiral and Harvard. The guy on the phone is convinced it's his hotel-same floors and everything. But you don't need to show ID to check in, so who knows?

Mahoney has the guy go and look. But Daniel's not there, he's not anywhere. Mahoney's been at this for almost twelve hours at this point, and his bosses have made it clear that they've done all they can do tonight. Mahoney disagrees. He's not a veteran himself, but he feels like Daniel's on a battlefield somewhere and he's being left behind. But he can't be here anymore, he knows that. So Mahoney gets up from the table. He gets in his vehicle outside. The sun's already up as he goes home.

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AND NOW, lying there in bed, the whole lousy rest of it comes back to Mike and Teresa, their boy in a terrible place they can't reach, the reality of who Daniel was and who he'd become settling in like a sad certainty. How he came back to Broken Arrow just four years into his marriage without his wife or child. How he returned to his childhood bedroom.

Daniel started telling people Crystal cheated on him. He blamed her for what his life had become. Mike and Teresa began finding empty packets of cold pills around the house. Teresa could tell when he was high. But he'd just deny it.

Had Daniel been like this even before the war? As a kid, Daniel could be irrational. Maybe he'd had more mental problems growing up than they'd realized, Mike and Teresa started thinking.

That winter, Daniel started driving around the country in search of relief. It was like he was trying to bore his way back into the past, to the few times that had been good. In February he drove all the way up to Washington, where he'd gone to high school. That's when he'd made the news in Bellevue, for barricading himself in his car with a couple of handguns. He'd posted on Facebook then, too, about hurting himself. "I loved every one of my friends," he wrote. "I wish you could have done the same and just I'm real clear there is a gun in my mouth...Please stop me from killing myself please...Please." One of his cousins called the police and they came and saved him. It was clear he didn't want to die then. Did he really want to die now? Mike and Teresa didn't know.

That spring, Crystal filed for divorce, and by May, Daniel was out in California again. He had nowhere to stay, so he slept in a park near Crystal's mother's house. The next day Crystal came home and there he was, looking sad and worn-out. She let him go into the front yard with Jaden, because she didn't know what else to do, and for two hours the two of them played out there. The day after that, Daniel came back. Crystal asked him to leave, and he wouldn't. He told her he had nowhere else to go. He stood outside on the lawn, staring into the house. That's when Crystal got the restraining order.

He was arrested that summer for violating the order, and a Veterans Court judge placed him in a voluntary treatment program. He stayed for a few weeks before leaving, violating the terms of his agreement. He went back to Oklahoma with a warrant out for his arrest.

Anyone who was friends with Daniel on Facebook could see that he wasn't well. He'd post long angry updates about Crystal, about how his friends and family had failed him. That winter, Splaine called Daniel and invited him to come stay with him for a while in Massachusetts. When he arrived that spring in 2013, it was almost like Daniel's lost brother had shown up instead—he was that different. He'd gained weight. Splaine would catch him in the bathroom, just staring blankly at the mirror, or out a window. This would go on for hours. It was nothing threatening. It didn't feel unsafe. It was just weird.

"If you want to send people to the military who don't come back with trauma, send well-adjusted people," Owens said. "But well-adjusted people don't want to go to war."

By January, he'd been arrested again in California for violating his restraining order. He went to jail, then was transferred to a treatment program for combat veterans at the West Los Angeles V.A. When they admitted him on the condition that he stay on campus for thirty days without leaving, they took an inventory of his few remaining possessions: a PowerBar, a snowboard, a guitar, a jacket, two flags, two shirts, and two pairs of shorts. He stayed a few weeks. Then

he walked away from the program and left California for the last time.

Teresa was in the backyard in early March when Daniel came riding up on his bicycle. He didn't have a car anymore, he told her. He didn't have anything. He told her he was living on the streets in Broken Arrow. Over the next few months, Mike and Teresa sometimes bought him food or put him up in a hotel. But they also asked him to stay away. It's not that they were afraid of him, exactly. But it had been an impossible three years. And you never knew which Daniel was going to show up.

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TUESDAY EVENING, May 6, nearly a full day after Daniel's phone goes dark. A woman looking for a place to rent in Broken Arrow peers through the back window of an empty house at 615 North 1st Street and sees a body lying on the floor, covered in blood.

Officer Shannon Scott is the patrol officer called to the scene. She'd dealt with Daniel before, here and there, around Broken Arrow—she'd heard that Daniel was missing. She'd like to find him. Scott is a veteran herself, twenty years in the military, about to make detective here with the Broken Arrow Police Department. She thinks of younger veterans like Daniel almost as her sons.

And now she's grieving because she recognizes Daniel right away. Through the window she can see the blood and the body. She can tell he's not breathing.

A few hours later, Deputy Mahoney is standing on the porch of Mike and Teresa's house. The second that Mike comes to the door, he knows.

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FOR TWO DAYS after Daniel was found, Facebook didn't take down the photos, despite the pleas of Daniel's friends, the Broken Arrow P.D., and the Wagoner County sheriff's office. And so for a brief moment Facebook became a place where Daniel was still alive, suspended in those last awful moments before death. "And for the next couple of days, every time I log on to Facebook, I see that," Owens told me. "And every time I see that, I go out to the liquor store and buy me another bottle."

Why'd Daniel do it that way, on Facebook? His family and friends had all that time to think about it. It was like some awful microcosm of the predicament in which vets find themselves in the first place—the way they were all on their own somehow. It was a condition they shared, Daniel and Splaine and the rest of the guys who'd been in Iraq. They were part of something together, but that something ate them up in such cruel and personal ways that there was no one way for them to solve it for themselves, let alone for someone else.

The only fight I ever lost was the one to myself.

A warriors death is what i seek in the valley of all these sheep.

Byeee bitches.

It was like he finally knew what was wrong with him. Like he almost felt joy in saying it out loud to everyone. In solving it.

"Do you know what the transition from the Marines at our time was?" Owens asks. "It consisted of a five-day class of 'Here's how you do your résumé, here's how you do your interview,' and then you're just kicked to the curb." Owens said he thought Daniel "was emotionally hurt when he first came into the Marine Corps. He looked for a place that was safe and he found that in Crystal. For whatever reason, their relationship was fractured. And then he was lost."

Another guy Wolfe served with told me he thought Delta was cursed. Like the company was somehow paying for the good luck it'd had. He listed all the friends he'd lost after they came back. Suicides, car accidents, overdoses. Guys just kept dying where they shouldn't be dying.

There were a million miserable things that could get you—cold medicine, troubled families, broken marriages, car accidents, doctors who didn't care, doctors who did care but couldn't force you to help yourself, cops and judges and bosses. But also: flaws that had been there long before the war, flaws that hit the war like a photo hits chemicals. Some of the Delta guys were okay now, some of them weren't, and it all just felt like luck. And the worst thing was, there you were, by yourself. No wonder Daniel had been trying to be with them at the end.

Crystal starts crying, thinking about it.
"To know that he was alone when he did it really hurts me, because I know he didn't like to be alone."

When the newspaper accounts of his death started coming out, Splaine and Owens and everyone else who knew the truth noticed that Daniel's lie about the Humvee was included in every obituary. But they understood.

"When he was himself, he was very real, very honest," Mikey Splaine told me one night. "I don't think he would want me to bullshit anything. I think you get a lot of that when something bad happens or a service member dies somehow or commits suicide. You don't get the full story. You think, 'Oh okay, Iraq.' But it's all these things. Normal-life bullshit on top of bullshit from the military." And maybe the normal-life bullshit was somehow even harder to bear.

"Look at the people who go to the military," James Owens said. "Who are they, for the most part? They aren't well-adjusted in the first place. If you want to send people to the military who don't come back with trauma, send well-adjusted people. But well-adjusted people don't want to go to war."

THERE'S ONE DETAIL that still haunts Mike. The day Daniel died, he'd applied for a driver's license—the form was in his backpack when he died. Mike shows it to me. Dated May 5, 2014. Daniel's signature across the bottom. He would've had to go to Broken Arrow City Hall to get it. The building is on 1st Street too.

What was going through Daniel's head? Mike keeps wondering. Did it mean that what came after was an accident? Did Daniel still picture a future that day? What did he see in it? Crystal or Jaden or all three of them, together? A house, a family, a job? Relief from whatever it was inside him that was taking all these things away? Did he picture high school in Bellevue, when he was loved, or the adobe house he and Crystal had together, right off the base, before Jaden was born? Him ducking through the doorways, a giant in a tiny pink house. Their whole lives ahead of them.

All we know for sure is this: That same day, he walked the low silent blocks up North 1st Street. And then he entered the house.

CRYSTAL'S STILL in Kentucky, and we talk one night this past winter. "It's lonely, I guess you could say."

She and Jaden had just moved into their own place, and she says she's been spending a lot of time with another military family in the area. The family actually reached out to her. They'd had twin boys, unplanned, and it was a lot to handle—the father's a veteran and suffers from PTSD and TBI just like Daniel did. So Crystal says she's been helping out, keeping him and his wife company, helping her look after their twins. The experience, she says, is bittersweet. "To see the mother, just like me, struggling with the same things I struggled with..." The two women have become close, Crystal says.

And Jaden's happy in Kentucky. Seven years old now. Starting second grade. She loves to swim, is artistic and a giant goofball, like her father. "All I see in her is him," Crystal says, with a hint of pride.

The week Daniel died was among their first in Kentucky. Crystal starts crying, thinking about it. "To know that he was alone when he did it really hurts me, because I know he didn't like to be alone. And then obviously to know that I had to tell my daughter was the worst part, you know?"

It was the beginning of the week. Crystal didn't tell Jaden right away because she didn't want her to have to go to school the next day knowing what had happened. "And so I decided I was going to wait till that Friday to tell her. And I decided that I was going to sort of prep her for it every day, saying little things and getting her used to the idea." Crystal and Daniel had been big on Halloween, and now Jaden loved it, too, all the "ghosts and zombies and skeletons and stuff like that." Crystal thought maybe the way to tell Jaden about her dad was to talk about Halloween. "And so I decided to start mentioning things in a serious manner, talking about people in my family who had died, how I missed them and what that meant. And they actually have a really bitchin' graveyard here. It's old-school, with those really big, really cool statues and stones." Crystal took Jaden there. "Obviously gravevards are supposed to be a scary place." but Crystal tried to make it not scary for Jaden. She told her ghost stories. They looked at the headstones. "And on that Friday, she got home from school, and I said, 'I have to tell you something about your daddy." Right away Jaden knew what it was.

They cried together. "She didn't get any closure, either," Crystal says. "He was just gone, you know?"

 ${\tt ZACH\ BARON}\ is\ {\tt GQ's}\ staff\ writer.$

WILLIE NELSON



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Nelson has always declined to identify his accomplice in mischief. But I've spent the past few weeks immersed in Nelson's life, and having picked off little clues from all that's been written and said over the years, I feel like I might have a pretty good idea. And what Nelson has just said to me seems like an open invitation to chance it.

I kind of reckon I know who it was.

"Oh, you know who it was?" He says this in what seems like a gently mocking whisper. Wasn't it Jimmy Carter's middle son, Chip?

And then there's a pause, not too long, but long enough that I feel pretty sure he wasn't expecting this name. And long enough that I know the name is right. But then—and maybe there's just a quarter of a second of delete/fast-forward, and a decision is made that there's no longer any point in getting too hung up about this—he rolls amiably on with the conversation.

"Looked a lot like," he says. "Could have been, yeah."

Why have you always been shy about saying?

"Well, it ain't something you want to brag about, you know."

When you were up there, did you think this is a big deal, this is kind of naughty, or...?

"Oh, not at the time. It seemed like the thing to do. We were there, and there it was, and uh...why not, you know? And they have a great view from the roof."

But it must have been a good story to tell people.

"Well, I don't really go around bragging about that. It happened, and it's something that I don't deny, you know, but I don't bring it up all the time."

"But it wasn't you who said it to begin with," Annie points out. (These events predate Annie, but she clearly knows the inside story.)

"No, it wasn't me who leaked it," says Willie.

"It was probably Chip," says Annie.

"You know, he probably told somewhere, laughing about it," says Willie.

Did you mind that people knew?

"No. I don't mind it, no. At all."

Did you worry it would embarrass the president at the time?

"Oh, I think he knew me and he knew Chip so, you know, there wasn't much we could do to embarrass him."

And so there it is: one minor mystery from the Carter administration solved. A few afternoons later, I telephone James Earl "Chip" Carter III, now 65 years old, at his home in Decatur, Georgia. He answers the phone and listens as I explain: that I have been talking to Nelson for this article about that famous night on the White House roof, and that Nelson did not volunteer his name, but when he realized I had worked it out, he had talked to me about it.

At first Carter seems to, very briefly, laugh. "Well," he says, "he told me not to ever tell anybody."

I tell Carter that I believe the cat is now out of the bag.

"Okay," he says evenly.

Then I continue, inquiring whether I can ask him some more about what happened.

"No," he says. "No, you can't. Thank you." And that is when James Earl Carter III hangs up.

FOR SOMEONE WITH Nelson's experience, and for someone who is planning to launch his own brand of pot, you might think that he would have the very specific tastes and preferences of a connoisseur, but if this is the case, he is not keen to share.

'There's only two kinds," he tells me. "It's like sex-it's all good, but some's better."

And with pot, what differentiates the good and the better?

"Well, you'll know it when you smoke it, and you might not know it until you do. A good hit off a good joint and you know you don't have to smoke the whole thing. A good joint'll last me all day."

You haven't settled on particular favorites you like?

"Oh, wherever I am there are favorites. You know, you got your Maui Wowie, you got your Humboldt County in California, and you got the purple, you know, uh, in Florida...lot of different places that have their own brand that's from the area. The growers and the farmers around can tell you what grows best in their area."

I know a lot of people who avoid some of the modern stuff that's just too strong for them.

"Really?" says Willie, his attention perking up. "I'm looking for that."

You've never found any too strong?

"No," he says.

"No, that's not true," Annie tells him. "You found a couple of those really strong ones...

"I found some of it that was really, really strong," he disagrees. "But too strong? No."

"His resistance is better than yours," Mickey Raphael, Nelson's longtime harmonica player, who's been listening in on our conversation, points out.

"That's the difference," says Willie. "I've been smoking cedar bark.'

"I'd beg to have the shit he throws away," savs Raphael.

Is there any stoned that's too stoned?

"Too stoned?" Nelson repeats. "I don't know. I don't know what too stoned is."

"Well," says Annie, "that time I found you in the back when my brother brought that purple African something and you were laying on the floor with your feet on the bed." She laughs. "And you said, 'I'm too high.'

He nods in acknowledgment. "However, I think if I had to I could have got up, washed my face, and went and do a two-hour show."

"You did," she points out.

"By the time I get through 'Whiskey River,' two or three songs, I'm okay."

So when you think of the prime Willie's Reserve brand, are you able to describe what qualities you want it to have?

"No," he says. "You'll know it when you smoke it."

"You want the shit that killed Elvis, is what you said," prompts Raphael.

Willie grins, glad to have been reminded. "That's what I'm looking for."

How hard have you looked?

"Well, how hard can you look, you know?" Willie says, smiling, as though there are things in life he has cared about more than this, but not too many.

IT IS HARD TO work out just how involved Nelson is in Willie's Reserve. When I first ask him what he wants the company to be, he just says "successful." And other than mentioning that he wants to make sure that what they sell is "the best quality," that's about it. "I don't know who first came up with that idea," he says vaguely. "Annie may have come up with the title, Willie's Reserve. I don't know exactly where that came from."

In an attempt to learn more, I speak with two people from the company, the CEO, Andrew Davison, and a vice president, Elizabeth Hogan. Davison explains that the first business meeting took place with Willie and Annie around the kitchen table at their ranch just outside Austin in March 2014, and presents the basic Willie's Reserve pitch: "For fifty years he's been such an icon in this space that [for] everybody taking part in the artistic development of this plant over the last thirty, forty years, it's kind of their bucket list to get product to Willie. And so Willie's experienced the best cornucopia that has been grown over the decades and, you know, he really developed a legendary stash. And he's developed a point of view about how he feels about the category and how he feels about the product and how he feels about consumers. So it's taking that and distilling that vision and those values, translating that into the marketplace."

In fact, there won't be just one Willie's Reserve Legendary Stash. Far from it. This is business. Davison says that according to their research, consumers want "high-quality flower," concentrates, vape pens, and edibles, and so they "envision going to a market with a variety and a collection of smokable products as well as concentrate products."

Nelson participated in a "tasting" of Willie's Reserve in June, when he was brought ten different strains to smoke. Hogan says that Nelson sampled them over two days; she took notes on his comments and left him and Annie with a workbook to fill out thoughts as his research continued.

I ask what conclusions were drawn.

"Well, you know," Hogan replies, "Willie Nelson likes pot."

In truth, at least some of the key selections had already been made, and the impression she gives is that Nelson's views are more to be used in the packaging and marketing than in determining specific pot choices. This seems wise, because when I catch up with Nelson after this tasting, he is characteristically breezy about the experience—"How bad a job can it be, testing the best weed in the world?"-but sidesteps any expectation that he should be considered an expert. "I think it all depends on the individual," he says, "and I've been smoking weed a long time and I've got a great tolerance for it, so whatever I say about it won't necessarily be the same thing that someone else would say, so I'm not really the best guy to ask about those things."

Davison says they hope that the first Willie's Reserve products will go on sale in Colorado and Washington "by late fall or end of year." Merle Haggard, who recently recorded the top ten Django and Jimmie album with Nelson, is optimistic about its prospects: "I think he's got a new brand that will probably be bigger than Sir Walter Raleigh." Typically, it is Nelson who dodges every opportunity to oversell it. He makes clear that while he's enthusiastic about Willie's Reserve, what really excites him is the wider evolution of society's attitude toward pot.

"I'm just glad to see all this happening," he says. "Whether there's a Willie Reserve or not, that's not a big deal."

WHEN IT COMES TO the benefits of the weed-lived life, Nelson's point of view is that he is an unscientifically representative sample of one. "I'm kinda like the canary in the mine," he says. "Here's the old fart, 82, out there doing an hour-and-a-half, two-hour show, remembering all the goddamn words-you know, he don't have a set list out or none of that shit out there. At least watch me and see what happens.' And so far the canary is thriving. Merle Haggard says that Nelson thinks they're both alive because of these lifestyle choices: "The main thing is that we're both healthy. That's in contrast to what they say about people who indulge. He told me-and I don't disagree with him-that had we not smoked pot during our life, then we would probably be dead from drinking whiskey or smoking Camels."

When Willie Nelson first made records, he was clean-shaven and short-haired, and favored a suit and tie. He started growing his hair in the early 1970s, and for well over thirty years now he has been alternating between letting his long gray hair hang freely and wearing it in two braids. Recently some braids he cut off in the early 1980s were put up for auction, where it was explained that he had given them to Waylon Jennings at a sobriety party in 1983. Nelson says this isn't quite true-he cut them off in Maui and gave them to his manager and "some way it got back to Waylon." Either way, they were auctioned off as part of Jennings's estate and sold for \$37,000.

"It's weird-very weird," he comments, though you can tell by the way he says it that this doesn't even come close to some of the weirdness he has known.

Still, it also made him realize that if everything goes wrong, at least he can feel safe knowing that the Willie Nelson emergency pension plan is close at hand, hanging down both sides of his ears.

As we talk, he fingers his right braid.

"I've got six months of groceries right here," he announces.

And then he jiggles its twin, the braid that dangles down over his heart. That, he explains, is the best side. "Things grow better over here," he says. And, come the need and come the day. he reckons it'd see him right in times of trouble, get him what he'd really want.

"Two or three pounds," he estimates, "of good pot."

CHRIS HEATH is a GQ correspondent.



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A thing people like to do in the sugar realm, when they're being defensive, is they like to tell you how they're doing just another version of what you're doing. "I bet you and your husband have a mutually beneficial relationship," Kitten said to me at one point. I told her that wasn't really true. We just loved each other and made it work. We're also both journalists, me and my husband, which is to say that we've been bringing each other down financially and "beneficially" since the day we met. Okay, says Kitten, but what she means is that this is really no different from what a stay-at-home mom does with her working husband: You earn the money and I'll do this other thing we need. The world is built on compromise and negotiation, and life is a series of small humiliations. All these arguments are in service of telling me that it's only our ingrained puritanism that brings us to judge formalized arrangements like this.

Before we parted ways and the woman at the next table was left to return to her resting blood pressure. Kitten showed me the SeekingArrangement app on her phone, all the messages that constantly come in from potential suitors. Some are cut-and-paste jobs saying, "I am interested in meeting a smart, classy woman interested in pushing her boundaries" (read: have threesomes). Most of them, though, simply read "\$500?" or "\$1,000?" and that's it.

"Look at me," says Kitten. I do. We all do. "I'm going to be used for my body. I might as well get something from it."

3. Scrooge McFuck

SCROOGE MCFUCK (not his real name) does not want a chub or an older girl (say, over 30), and he does not want "a black," and yes, maybe you'll think he's a jerk, but he wants what he wants, and what is so wrong with that? Scrooge could probably have any woman he wants he's wealthy and single and a TV producer in Las Vegas-and so it's hard to understand why he doesn't just go out there and find someone in a more traditional way.

Until he explains it. See, Scrooge has a Weird Sex Thing he likes, and he finds it hard to bring it up. "I'm not going into detail here" and he never does, and we will all die not knowing, all of us except a few lucky ladies— "but there are certain things that I enjoy about sex, certain things, and it's difficult to tell the typical date about those things, so I never get past the first date."

When someone is part of an arrangement, though, they are more understanding about your Weird Sex Thing, Scrooge explains, because they are evaluating a deal; they are not assessing your morality. You can even put it out on the table before the first date. And if she says no, she's not for you. Her loss!

(And here I must confess that I've become obsessed to the point of being unhinged over trying to figure out what sex act Scrooge could possibly want that is so horrible. Is it something plain and regular, like anal? Maybe he wants to wear some lingerie? Does he want to punch her in the stomach while he sucks on a pacifier? Does he need her in a clown suit as he takes a dump on her clown nose? I'll be doing the dishes and it will come to me, these unbidden thoughts that are nonetheless relentless. Often in the past few months, my first thought upon waking up is a new possibility for Scrooge, "Maybe he wants to wear a saddle and be hit with a riding crop while he recites Whitman," I will tell my husband. "Can I have coffee before we discuss this?" he will answer.)

There was some trial and error in trying to find the right girl, but eventually Scrooge found a 22-year-old whom he was able to take to Pink concerts and to plays and to movies before taking her up to his hotel or apartment to conduct the Weird Sex Thing he needs so badly that he cannot even wait till a third date before asking for it. He gives her roughly \$500 each time they see each other, sometimes more, sometimes less, depending on congestion pricing.

Now, are you ready for something sweet? He could see himself marrying her! And this, he says, is what makes sugar dating different from prostitution. "I don't have an extensive track record with escorts, prostitutes, or hookers," says Scrooge. "But I've done it a couple of times in foreign countries. And it's just the biggest turnoff you've ever seen. It's like all business. They don't smile." With sugar babies, no one's on the clock. There's hugging and kissing, laughing and talking.

With sugar babies, he says, it's almost like a real person who actually loves you.

4. Tigress St. Fawn

TIGRESS ST. FAWN (not her real name) was always attracted to older guys, even when she was an undergrad. The guys at college in Boston just didn't do it for her. If she's honest, it was her dad's friends she was always attracted to. (Don't get her wrong, though: "I have a really healthy relationship with my dad; he's one of my best friends.") Before graduating, she heard about sugar dating, and the minute she did, she immediately booked herself five dates in one week, as a sort of immersive experience, in hopes of getting the full breadth of all it had to offer. Here's how the week went.

Monday: She met the guy at The Charles Hotel and went back to his place. She gave him a blow job, and then she fell asleep for two hours. He woke her up to drive her home and said, "'Oh, I have like \$500. Is that okay?' And I'm like, 'Oh yeah. Yes, that's fine. Yeah, that's great. Thank you.' He's like, 'Okay. Here.' Like, 'I'll talk to you soon.'"

Tuesday: She met another guy at the local seafood shack for shrimp and margaritas. They went back to her place, and they both tried on her clothes and she gave him a blow job. He left her \$400. He's married, but something something-Tigress never got the full story. She still sees this guy.

Wednesday: This guy was really old, maybe 75. After sushi and a Viagra, they went to his house. He lay down on an ottoman and asked her to get on top. Eventually he had convulsions that were not unlike an orgasm, but something was off. He told her to leave. The next day he texted her from the hospital and told her he was breaking it off because she was "too crazy" for him in bed. \$500.

Keep in mind it's only Wednesday.

Thursday: She went out with a scientist in his late fifties whose wife had a medical condition that prevented her from having sex or something else that is obviously completely made up. They didn't get around to the sex stuff until date two, but when they did, he asked for her to tell him incestuous fantasies while they did it-sisters, uncles, whatever. \$500, boom.

Friday: She met a European crystallographer who asked her to accompany him to some sort of crystallography conference in New Orleans for \$5,000 for a week. She said yes, because that sounded like a vacation compared with the week she'd just had.

Now, Tigress is an MFA candidate; she showed me her chapbook, which is equal parts poetry and erotica. Her parents know about the men, and they don't love it, but, well, are they paying all of her tuition? They are not. If you ask her if this is prostitution-I never once did with the women I interviewed; every time, they brought it up-she'll say the question is moot.

"I'm kind of pragmatic about the whole thing," she says. She looks across the table at me, the dummy who had to reschedule on her twice because of all the work I juggle, who has spent far more time and energy writing this story than a commensurate amount of blow jobs would require.

For Tigress, the question is not whether she's a prostitute. It's whether the rest of us are idiots.

5. John

JOHN (NOT HIS REAL NAME) wanted all New York City had to offer when he left his conservative parents in Connecticut for school. They couldn't accept that he was gay, so good riddance to them and their money. But Manhattan is expensive, and he really wanted to live the life, so he and his best friend—a young woman also newly arrived at collegeset out to see how they'd fare if they tried SeekingArrangement.

At 20, John has had two sugar daddies with formal long-term arrangements, and a couple of one-off dates where he just met the guys and got dinner and a show. He refused to have sex with any of them immediately; he wanted the guys to have to work for it. But they wouldn't, because that's not how this works, so he got dumped. Finally he found a guy who was married to a woman and kept a pied-à-terre for his sugar-baby dalliances. He was selfish, according to John, and they never went anywherethe guy just wanted sex.

The second guy was better, and they had a good run together. John was never comfortable with the implications of a cash exchange. Instead, he took gifts: a Marc Jacobs watch, some suits from Burberry. "I would rather have the experiences and stuff," he says. "Tangible things instead of just 'Here's some cash.' That's tacky to me, to be completely honest. It's totally tacky."

Eventually the guy broke up with John. He wanted to have threesomes, and John didn't, and the way the guy acted-angry, entitled tantrums about "didn't I buy you a new computer"-showed John exactly what was going on here. John had seen this before. The first guy didn't want to use protection, and he seemed to get turned on trying to get John to relent, then was outraged when John refused. John got out. Now he works the front desk at a health club.

Sometimes John misses sugar dating. Without it, he'd never have seen The Book of Mormon on Broadway, which he highly recommends. And there was the traveling, too. He got a glimpse of a life he couldn't afford. But something in him knew that there were things he shouldn't just be giving away.

"We went to Naples," he told me. "It's sooo beautiful. Have you ever been?" No, I told him, I'd never been to Italy. He furrowed his brow and corrected me.

"It's right near Sarasota."

6. Rich and Ilene

RICH (NOT HIS REAL NAME) and Ilene (nor hers) walk into maybe the fanciest restaurant in this small midwestern city, which is saying nothing.

I didn't expect who I've found. I'm naive in general, but at this point in the story, I'm so much less naive than I've ever been. I traveled for six hours to be here, and there's not even a measly garter belt or gross double entendre in sight. Instead, I get Rich and Ilene, both smiley, she with her freckles and dimples, he with his goofy laugh.

She's 20, a registered nurse who ran off from her controlling parents. He's 33, an academic who just couldn't find the right girl. She saw that same Dr. Phil episode with the sugar babies—"It was just slut shaming," she says and she saw the potential for something better. She needed to get through nursing school. She needed to not be in debt for the rest of her life.

(Now, here it would be fair to wonder: Just how much does an academic earn? I met sugar daddies who make \$100,000. I met ones who earn more than a million. To imagine that this is for rich people is to have missed the point; any amount of money is more money than some people have. Megalomania is not only for the one percent.)

Rich was trying to meet people, putting himself out there, open to setups, but who are you going to date? A student? He tried OkCupid, Match, all of it. But this town, so small that the university Wi-Fi network works in every corner of it, is not exactly flooded with eligible women. His last relationship was long-distance; she had a high-powered career, and eventually he realized he needed to be the one calling the shots.

Rich and Ilene met and had sex at his apartment that very night. But their arrangement seems more like a father-daughter relationship than anything else. She needs an interview outfit? They'll go shopping for it together, and of course he'll buy it. I ask if she realizes that one day she won't be 20, and one day she'll want to buy something without having to ask for it. She shrugs and says yes. He sighs. He didn't realize they were going to be this honest with me.

Not all sugar dating is pathological, but psychologists will tell you that this is the point of it all: that yes, there are people who just want to date someone and not have to meet their mother or answer their needy text messages, but most of them are in it for the power-not just the choices that the power enables, but the aphrodisiac of the power itself.

One specialist told me that most of these people want to be saviors, but they also want to humiliate. It's a common dynamic to suss out the sugar baby's boundaries-threesomes, say, or anal, whatever it is that pushes her beyond her moral code or value system-and then make her an offer that gets her to do it anyway: There's the power, and the altruism. It's not just that John's sugar daddy wanted to have unprotected sex with him. He wanted to make John do something he didn't want to do, and then have the quick cleanup of his conscience by saying, "But I'm helping the poor kid!"

Rich and Ilene are sweet together, truly, holding hands, sharing their food, in sync, and their arrangement now is for good. Not long after our meal together, he proposed, and Ilene is relieved. When people ask, they just say they met online, that the age difference "is what it is." And that will be that.

Back at dinner, I take my glasses off and set them on the table and rub the bridge of my nose. It's been a long time since I began this story, and I have been exposed to no small amount of sociopathy, delusion, denial, and misogyny in the reporting of it. So many women telling me they want their "Pretty Woman moment." So many men telling me how kind they are to be supporting, even mentoring, "these girls."

And in exchange "these girls" think they're getting what they want. But you can't get what you want in this world without a scam, without thinking you are the grifter and not the mark. Kitten believes she is gaming the system, profiting off her body instead of being used for it, but she's not making as much as she could if she were a better negotiator. Tigress thinks she's doing the smallest amount of work for the most amount of money, but if you talk to her, there is something off there, something not right in her bragging and eagerness. John's sugar daddy, who bought the suits and the domestic plane tickets, thought he was the one in control, but it was John who had what the sugar daddy wanted and wouldn't give it to him. Everyone here is on the hustle, and everyone here thinks they're winning. And so what's so wrong with that? Who exactly is getting hurt?

That, my friends, is the scam, here at the intersection of greed and loneliness and insecurity and the basic human need for survival. You can tell yourself whatever story you want. and eventually you'll forget you're telling a story and you'll find yourself in the parking lot of a Pizzeria Uno getting sucked off by someone who thinks she's getting the better end of the deal. And the worst part is, you'll think you're helping her. And she'll give you that blow job, all the while wondering how she could get so lucky, how you could be so dumb. Everyone gets what they want. And, sure, what's so wrong with that?

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STEPHEN COLBERT



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forgot to bring into his bunker was the K-Cup machine. He bites into one of the plastic K-Cups in despair. The coffee grounds go all over his face and mouth and up his nose. "Oh, that's really pumpkin-y." End scene.

He went to the bathroom to wash the coffee out of his nose and then as he was heading back to his office got an update on a request they'd made to Mitt Romney to do a teaser spot for the new show. They felt it was important that their first fun interaction with a politician involve a Republican. ("I think he'll do it," Colbert said. "I think he likes to have fun. Plus, he's got nothing else going on.") Then it was into a meeting with various camera techs and graphic artists to discuss complicated questions regarding how images might be projected onto the surfaces of the new theater (I'm sworn to silence on this, but the stuff they were talking about was very cool), and from there he headed to an editing bay down the hall.

He took a seat on the floor to watch a replay of the video-"Apocalypse Dow"-and give notes. "I am high as a kite right now!" he said. "I tried to wash my nose out, but all I did was brew a cup of pumpkin-spice coffee in my nose."

"Everybody was jumping in. Everybody was saying, 'What is an unasked added value that I can give the show?'" Colbert said. "And that is true joy. That's the joy machine."

The next hour goes by so fast. They make their way through the video, beat by beat. The look on Colbert's face as he edits is pure focus and elation. He moves his lips along with the lines, he mimics the changing expression of his face in the scene. His notes are hyperdetailed. Cut this line. It's gotta be faster from here to here. Let's make the screen go warblystaticky every time I hit the desk. No, still too clean, more static. Do we know yet what actually happened with the stock exchange? Someone mentions there was a tweet by a member of Anonymous yesterday, warning of something to come. Okay, let's get a standard Getty image of a Guy Fawkes mask and insert it, just a flicker, during one of the warbles. Just one. Subtle. It needs to warble like everything else in the picture. Let's look at the news clips for the top. Okay, let's do these five in this order. No, still too long. It's gotta go: United, China, cyberfailure, Wall Street, poodle. I want a static cut between each of the clips, then longer static after the poodle, and that transitions into me.

He leaves the editing room and heads back to his office and learns along the way that Mitt Romney is in for shooting the teaser, they'll bring him in for a day from New Hampshire—"Yeah, Daddy-o!"—then stops at his assistant's desk, and she reminds him that he still has to record a podcast and not to forget that he has the thing for Catholic Charities.

It's a little after seven, and the sun's starting to set over the Hudson River. There are several bottles of expensive bourbon in his office, and he pours a glass for each of us and then sits down and exhales.

"That was fun," he says. "What you just saw me do—the number of things you saw me talk to people about, the number of different things—you saw like four different tags on a single idea.... That's it. That's what liking process gets you to, the ability to process a great deal of information. And everybody in this building can do it. Everybody was jumping in. Everybody had ideas. Everybody was saying, 'What is an unasked added value that I can give the show?' And that is true joy. That's the joy machine."

HE USED TO have a note taped to his computer that read, "Joy is the most infallible sign of the existence of God."

It's hard to imagine any comedian meditating every day on so sincere a message. It's even harder when you know his life story, which bears mentioning here—that he is the youngest of eleven kids and that his father and two of his brothers, Peter and Paul, the two closest to him in age, were killed in a plane crash when he was 10. His elder siblings were all off to school or on with their lives by then, and so it was just him and his mother at home together for years. They moved from James Island to downtown Charleston, and she sent him to a prep school, Porter-Gaud, where for the next several years he did next to nothing academically. "There was no way to threaten me," he said. "It was like, 'What? What's that? Oh, okay, I might get a bad grade? Oh no. Wouldn't want that.'

His first night professionally onstage with Second City, Colbert learned the most important lesson of his career: "You have to learn to love the bomb."

He was completely traumatized, of course. And one way of contending with the cruel indifference of the universe is to be indifferent in return. But he was also raised in a deeply Catholic intellectual family (his father had been a dean of Yale Medical School and St. Louis University and the Medical College of South Carolina). And so his rebellion against the world was curiously self-driven and thoughtful. He refused to do anything his teachers required of him, but would come home every day and shut himself in his room and read books. "I had so many books taken away from me," he said. "I read a book a day. Spent all of my allowance on books. Every birthday, confirmation, Christmas-books, please, stacks of books."

He barely graduated from high school and then went to Hampden-Sydney College in Virginia only because a friend had applied there. He studied philosophy; he joined the school's theater troupe. After his sophomore year he transferred to Northwestern's theater program, where he was purely focused on drama. "I was doing Stanislavsky and Meisner, and I was sharing my pain with everyone around me," he says in an interview that appears in Judd Apatow's book Sick in the Head. "It was therapy as much as it was anything."

And then he met Del Close, the legendary improv teacher and mentor and champion of the idea that improvisational comedy, when performed purely, was in fact high expressive art.

"I went, 'I don't know what this is, but I have to do it,'" he said. "I have to get up onstage and perform extemporaneously with other people." He was part of the same Second City class that included Amy Sedaris and Paul Dinello and Chris Farley. "Our first night professionally onstage," he said, the longtime Second City director Jeff Michalski told them that the most important lesson he could pass on to them was this: "You have to learn to love the bomb."

"It took me a long time to really understand what that meant," Colbert said. "It wasn't 'Don't worry, you'll get it next time.' It wasn't 'Laugh it off.' No, it means what it says. You gotta learn to *love* when you're failing... The embracing of that, the discomfort of failing in front of an audience, leads you to penetrate through the fear that blinds you. Fear is the mind killer." (You're welcome, *Dune* nerds.)

The central tension in his life, he said, is between being a "reasonably friendly, goodat-a-cocktail-party guy" and walking around the world feeling like he's not quite a part of it. "I'm a very uncomfortable person," he said. "I really like people, and I also don't always know what to do with them.... I have always had an eclectic roster of friends, but there's something about my work that speaks to a deep discomfort with being in society."

He said he trained himself, not just onstage but every day in life, even in his dream states, to steer toward fear rather than away from it. "I like to do things that are publicly embarrassing," he said, "to feel the embarrassment touch me and sink into me and then be gone. I like getting on elevators and singing too loudly in that small space. The feeling you feel is almost like a vapor. The discomfort and the wishing that it would end that comes around you. I would do things like that and just breathe it in." He stopped and took in a deep yogic breath, then slowly shook his head. "Nope, can't kill me. This thing can't kill me."

I apologized for the lack of subtlety and asked him how much he connected that urge to his training, and how much he felt it had roots that went deeper into his life. Was it at one point purely a defense mechanism against the pain he'd experienced?

He raised an eyebrow. "I don't know, Doctor. You tell me."

And then he said, "Obviously there's something defensive about it. What you're doing is sipping little bits of arsenic so that you can't be poisoned by the rest of your discomfort. You're Rasputin-ing your way through the rest of your life."

THAT DAY AFTER he got back from Michigan, we eventually got around to the question of how it could possibly be that he suffered the losses he's suffered and somehow arrived here. It's not just that he doesn't exhibit any of the anger or open-woundedness of so many other comedians; it's that he appears to be so genuinely grounded and joyful.

He sat silently for a while and then smiled. "Yeeeahhhh," he said. "I'm not angry. I'm not. I'm *mystified*, I'll tell you that. But I'm not angry."

There were such depths in the way he said "mystified."

"That might be why you don't see me as someone angry and working out my demons onstage. It's that I love the thing that I most wish had not happened."

It was hard to talk about these things, he said. "I want to answer in ways that are not pat. And so I want to take a moment and think of a way to answer that isn't pre-packaged."

There was a time when he'd done a lot of press for his old show, which inevitably entailed answering some version of this question over and over. And then he decided to stop, refusing even to do any exit interviews when *The Colbert Report* came to an end. "But I can't imagine why anyone wants to hear anything about me anymore," he said. "This is not meant as resistance, or pejoratively. I'm just being honest." And so the challenge was "to find a way to do press that isn't just a carbonated version of a drink I brewed many, many years ago. Just throw effervescence into a drink I've already brewed."

He didn't have to do this. He was exhausted. He had so many other things to do that day, meetings stacked up for the next few hours, people peeking in through his office window hoping to grab a moment of his time. He could have certainly given a version of the answer he's given before. Or he could have said, Come on, man, right now? Just let me eat my chicken with hot sauce in peace, will you?

Instead he said, "So my reaction when I hear that question isn't"—he shifted into a somber, sonorous voice—"'Oh, I don't want to talk about that.' It's that I don't want to say this—ready?" He snapped his fingers and locked eyes with me in a pose of dramatic intensity. "MY. MOTHER." His face softened. "But the answer is: my mother."

He lifted his arms as if to take in the office, the people working and laughing outside his door, the city and the sky, all of it. "And the world," he said. "It's so...lovely. I'm very grateful to be alive, even though I know a lot of dead people." The urge to be grateful, he said, is not a function of his faith. It's not "the Gospel tells us" and therefore we give thanks. It is what he has always felt: grateful to be alive. "And so that act, that impulse to be grateful, wants an object. That object I call God. Now, that could be many things. I was raised in a Catholic tradition. I'll start there. That's my context for my existence, is that I am here to know God, love

STEPHEN COLBERT CONTINUED

God, serve God, that we might be happy with each other in this world and with Him in the next-the catechism. That makes a lot of sense to me. I got that from my mom. And my dad. And my siblings.

He was tracing an arc on the table with his fingers and speaking with such deliberation and care. "I was left alone a lot after Dad and the boys died.... And it was just me and Mom for a long time," he said. "And by her example am I not bitter. By her example. She was not. Broken, yes. Bitter, no." Maybe, he said, she had to be that for him. He has said this beforethat even in those days of unremitting grief. she drew on her faith that the only way to not be swallowed by sorrow, to in fact recognize that our sorrow is inseparable from our joy, is to always understand our suffering, ourselves, in the light of eternity. What is this in the light of eternity? Imagine being a parent so filled with your own pain, and yet still being able to pass that on to your son.

"It was a very healthy reciprocal acceptance of suffering," he said. "Which does not mean being defeated by suffering. Acceptance is not defeat. Acceptance is just awareness." He smiled in anticipation of the callback: "'You gotta learn to love the bomb," he said. "Boy, did I have a bomb when I was 10. That was quite an explosion. And I learned to love it. So that's why. Maybe, I don't know. That might be why you don't see me as someone angry and working out my demons onstage. It's that I love the thing that I most wish had not happened."

I love the thing that I most wish had not happened.

I asked him if he could help me understand that better, and he described a letter from Tolkien in response to a priest who had questioned whether Tolkien's mythos was sufficiently doctrinaire, since it treated death not as a punishment for the sin of the fall but as a gift. "Tolkien says, in a letter back: 'What punishments of God are not gifts?" Colbert knocked his knuckles on the table. "'What punishments of God are not gifts?" he said again. His eyes were filled with tears. "So it would be ungrateful not to take everything with gratitude. It doesn't mean you want it. I can hold both of those ideas in my head."

He was 35, he said, before he could really feel the truth of that. He was walking down the street, and it "stopped me dead. I went, 'Oh, I'm grateful. Oh, I feel terrible.' I felt so guilty to be grateful. But I knew it was true.

"It's not the same thing as wanting it to have happened," he said. "But you can't change everything about the world. You certainly can't change things that have already happened."

Consider that this is coming from a man who millions of people will soon watch on their televisions every night-if only there were a way to measure the virality of this, which he'll never say on TV, I imagine, but which, as far as I can tell, he practices every waking minute of his life.

The next thing he said I wrote on a slip of paper in his office and have carried it around with me since. It's our choice, whether to hate something in our lives or to love every moment of them, even the parts that bring us pain. "At every moment, we are volunteers."

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OLD WORLD, NEW WINE



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countryside, between the mountains and the Mediterranean. It is nowhere a GPS can find. at least not the one in the car I rented at the airport in Catania. The roads are narrow and broken, the signage sparse, the roundabouts a mystery. This is not an area of Italy where wine tourism exists, although Occhipinti's fame is such that she is in demand. She says, "If you go to Barolo, you can see the important vineyards—everything is well defined. In Vittoria, nothing is defined. It is chaos. I like the chaos of my place."

At 33 years old—with eleven years running her own vineyard-Occhipinti has come to embody the winemaker of the new wine world: entrepreneurial, independent, selfpromotional, self-possessed, irresistible. The growing of grapes has been an occupation in Sicily for eons, but making a living as a small, independent producer-vintner is a new profession. Occhipinti owns the winery, farms the land, makes the wine, and has become so celebrated, says her assistant, that she receives letters from jail. "My grandmother says I sleep with one eye sleeping and the other thinking," she says. When statues are erected to honor the new winemaker movement, she should be the model, much as Catherine Deneuve is now emblematic of Marianne of France.

She makes six different wines, the contents and labels varying with the years, but her standards are SP68 Nero d'Avola e Frappato. a red, and SP68 Bianco, a white, both named for the nearby road that goes by her winery. Il Frappato-named for a local grape that tastes like a rustic cousin of Pinot Noir-is her signature red. She is the patron saint of Frappato, and if you taste her 2012 bottling, the body light, the acidity bracing, you understand why. None of her wines are extraordinarily concentrated—that is not the style of the new winemakers. The wines of Southern Italy tend to be robust, but she says that is not natural, "I cannot make concentrated wines in a place where there is no concentration, cannot talk terroir if we modify everything in the cellar," she says.

The life of Occhipinti is complicated—while I was there, she was constructing a combination home-and-winery that will integrate modernity with artifacts of Sicily's past, including ancient wine vats chiseled from stone. Like many of the winemakers from emerging regions, Occhipinti is also a scientist, a designer, a laborer, an inventor, and a historian, although she prefers to be thought of as a farmer, nothing more. "It is not a sad life anymore," she explains. "We are proud to be farmers."

ALAN RICHMAN is a GQ correspondent.

ADDITIONAL CREDITS

Pages 199-200. 1) Producer: Jeremy McGuire at GE-Projects. Stylist: Michael Nash. Prop stylist: Arnold Barros. Grooming: Paola Orlando at ABTP. On Beckham, shorts: Dior Homme. Compression shorts, socks, and shoes: Nike. Jewelry: his own. 2) Graham: Christian Petersen/Getty Images, Goodell: Splash News/Corbis, Photographs for editorial purposes only.

Page 201. 3) Stylist: Michael Nash. Grooming: David Cox for KEVIN.MURPHY. On McCoy, necklace: Uron.

ges 202–203. 4) Otto Greule Jr./Getty Images. 5-8) From left, Tom Pennington/Getty Images; Kevin C. Cox/ Getty Images; Justin Edmonds/Getty Images; Jonathan Daniel/Getty Images. 9) Adam Bettcher/Getty Images. 10) George Bridges/AbacaUSA/Polaris. 11) Producer: Tricia Sherman for Bauerfeind Productions-West. Stylist: Vanessa Shokrian at Celestine Agency. Prop stylist: Abraham Latham for Art Department. Grooming: David Cox for KEVIN. MURPHY. On Jackson, shirt: Lululemon. Jewelry: his own. Photographs for editorial purposes only.

Page 204. 12) Producer: Lindsay Regan. Stylist: Michael Nash. Prop stylist: Ed Murphy at Art Works Hollywood. Grooming: David Cox for KEVIN.MURPHY. On Edelman, shirt, shorts, socks, and shoes: Puma.

ages 206–207. Hair: Blake Erik at Jed Root. Makeup: Pep Gay using Diorshow. Manicure: Ana-Maria for Dior Vernis. Set design: Michael Bednark. Left, bikini top: Missoni. Necklace: vintage. Right, shirt: Marc Jacobs. Bikini bottom: Charlie by Matthew Zink

age 223. Producer: Tricia Sherman at Bauerfeind Productions–East. Stylist: Cannon at Judy Casey. Prop stylist: Stockton Hall at Art Department. Hair: Takuya Sugawara using Bumble and bumble. Makeup: Angela Di Carlo, Manicure: Jackie Saulsbery using Dior Vernis. On him, suit: Ralph Lauren, Shirt: Ted Baker, Tie: Faconnable, Cuff links: Korloff Paris. On her, dress: Twenty Cluny. Jewelry: Le Vian. Watch: her own. Cigars and lighter courtesy of Cigar Inn.

Page 225. On him, suit: Ralph Lauren. Shirt: Façonnable. Tie: Turnbull & Asser. On her, dress: Dolce & Gabbana. Lingerie: Victoria's Secret. Jewelry: Le Vian. Watch: her own. Vintage rings and Geneva Platinum men's watch from rrrentals.

Page 234. On women, tops and shorts: American Apparel. Sneakers: Nike

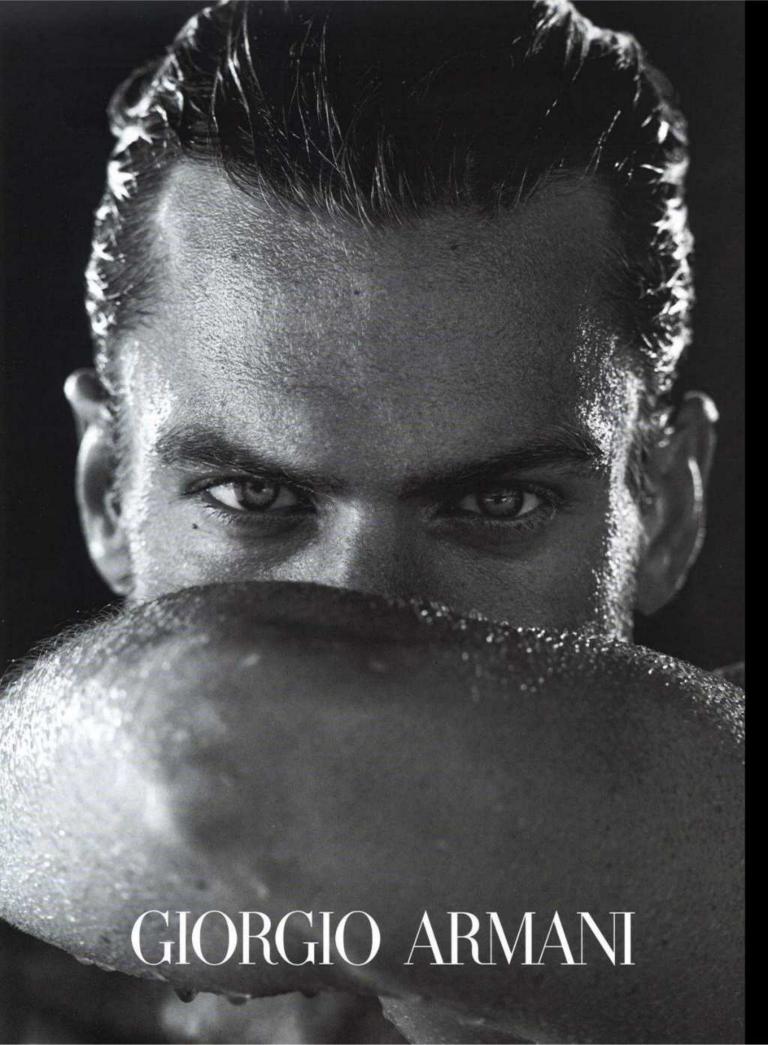
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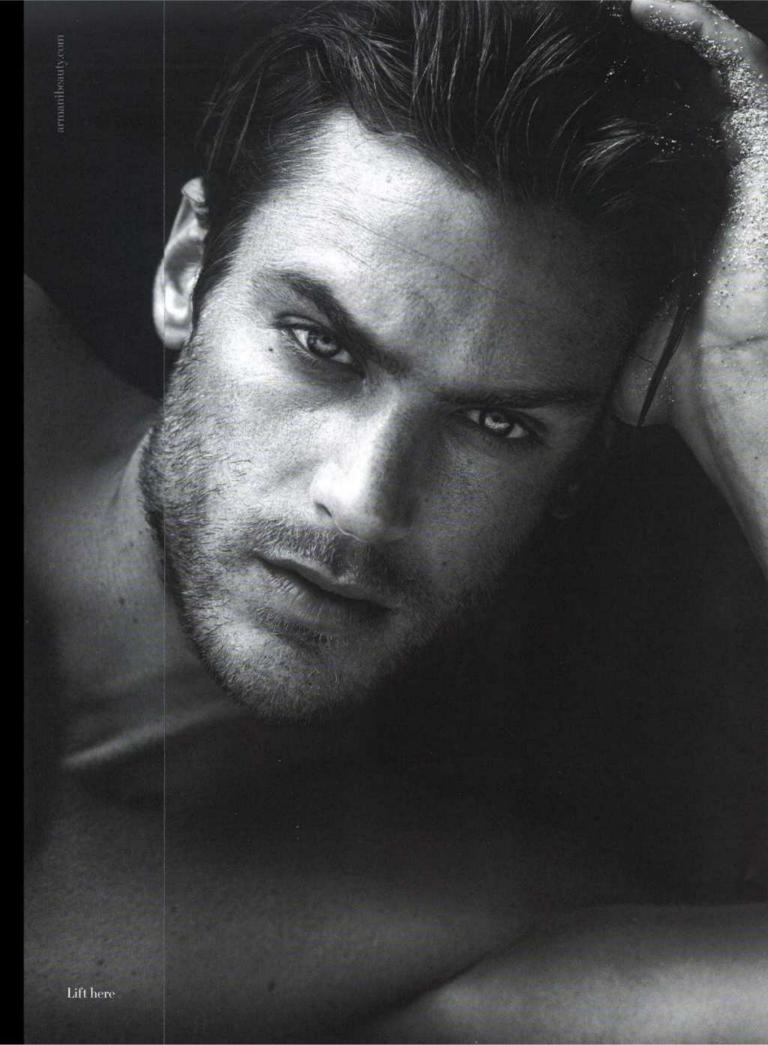
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